

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE SUFIS
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSIAN LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE IN BIHAR**

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Submitted By

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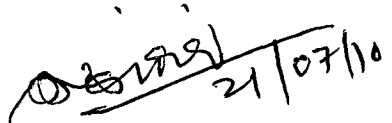
DECLARATION

I declare that the work done in thesis entitled "Contribution of the Sufis in the Development of Persian Language and Literature in Bihar" by me is an original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree in this or any other University/Institution.


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DEDICATED
TO
LATE JB. BADI-UZ-ZAMA KHAN (NAANA)
AND
MRS AKHTARUN NISHAN (NAANI)
WHO WERE THE FIRST TEACHER OF MY LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Islam is not just a religion, it is also a civilization. In the areas of its greatest concentration in Asia and Africa it produced a shared cultural heritage, which is often far more important than regional or ethnic elements. It has given rise to societies having distinct political institutions and military and legal traditions peculiar to the muslim world. Sufism is a main mystical tradition of Islam. However Mystic traditions are found in most of the religions of the world. Its adherents in India are known as Bhaktas, Sadakas, Faqirs and derwishes, who all form a true mystic brotherhood.

The English word Sufism is used to designate a set of practices, an ideal, and one of the Islamic religious sciences. It is employed to translate the term Tasawwuf, which means literally 'wearing wool' (wool, Suf, being the dress of eastern Christian and Muslim world renouncers). But also and far more commonly, means 'belonging to the faith and doctrine of the people called the Sufis' or trying to become a 'Sufi'. As for the name Sufi itself, its derivation from the word for wool does not exclude the possibility of the reference to Greek term Sophos, meaning wise.

Medieval India, including Bihar was dominated by theistic religions 'Bhakti in Hinduism and Sufism in Islam'. They were both overwhelmed by a sense of love of God and the quest of soul for the one ultimate reality. Sufism does not, as the suffix 'ism' would suggest, imply a body of uniform religious doctrines, dogmatic and systematized, nor is it an organized sect of Islam. Mystical principles prevailed as much among the Shia'hs as among the Sunnis. This research study envisages the role and contribution of the Sufis in the development of Persian language and literature in Bihar.

The aim of the Sufi is to realize the one reality diffused over the whole universe. He considers human life as a journey and himself as a traveler, a seeker of God. He sets out in the quest of God by slow stages (Manazil or Maqamat), the first of which is humanity (Nasut) in which he must live by action conforming to the canon law (Shariat) and precepts and practices of Islam. The second stage is considered to be angelic in nature (Malakut) which he reaches by keen perception and meditation and through the pathway of purity (Tariqat) passing through the

third stage of power (Jabarut) by requisitioning the aid of knowledge or gnosis (Marifat), he attains the truth or reality (Haqiqat) which is the stage of Lahut (absorption of divinity).

Love, liberalism, latitudinarianism and eclecticism have been the distinctive features of Sufism. The sufi represents himself as entirely devoted to the search for truth and thinks that there may be partial truth in all different religions of the world. He holds that the foundation of all the religious beliefs must be essentially true. The different forms of worship result from a variety of names and attributes by which God reveals himself in the creation.

Bihar is one of the Indian States, which has played a prominent role in the promotion of Persian language and literature in India. The developmental role played in the arena of culture was carried on by Persian poets, writers and more importantly, Sufis. It is quite remarkable that this particular region gave to the world not only such noble thinkers, reformers and humanists as Gautam Buddha, Mahavir and Ashoka but also great Sufis like Makhdoom-e-Jahan-Shah Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri, Sultan Ahmad Chirmposh, Muzaffar Shams Balkhi and many others. The Buddhist temples at Bodhgaya, Rajgir, the splendid tombs of Makhdoom-Bihar and Daulat Shah, the Mausoleum of Sher Shah, the architect of modern Patna at Sasaram and the birth place of Guru Govind Singh speak of their glorious past.

The rich tradition of culture and spiritualism took a new and even more impressive turn with the advent of the Muslims in the region. According to traditional accounts, Momin Arif and Imam Taj Faquih were the first Muslim Sufis in Maner- a place of considerable antiquity and one of the earliest centres of Muslim habitation and activities in Bihar. According to folklore the Raja fled from Maner, afraid of their influence on people. In those days many places of Bihar, had become abode of Sufis. They constructed Khanqahs and from there on carried on literary activities. Among such places Maner, in present Biharsharif district and Phulwarisharif near Patna are very prominent and have left a deep mark in the field of Persian language.

Need of the Study

There has been no serious effort in the field of Sufi writers for the development of Persian literature in Bihar. There is a lack of concerted literature in compiling the works of all prominent Sufis of Bihar in a standard form. We find information related to this topic in bits and

pieces. The late Prof.S.H.Askari's pioneering effort on the study of Sufis of medieval Bihar is a true inspiration for the researcher to choose this topic. His contribution in this field is unparalleled.

Another main reason for choosing this topic for the study is that the Sufi mystics of Bihar played a voluminous role in the socio-religious affairs of the community. They had an immense role on people of all kinds be it masses, nobles, kings or princes. They gave a tremendous impetus to the linguistic assimilation and to cultural synthesis. It was their effort that Islam obtained a lasting hold in Bihar. The glimpses that we get in their writing of their lives and activities, piety and learning, and the information we gather about the religious, moral, and social percepts they preached can hardly be ignored.

The main reason why the researcher wrote the study in English because there is a need for people who are not related to Islam to read and understand the contribution of Persian as a medium of language in Bihar's Sufi writings which spearheaded in spreading the message of love, humility and universal brotherhood. Whereas the manuscripts are available only in Persian language, most of the secondary sources on this topic are available only in Urdu. Moreover many Indians who are not Muslims too visit Khanqahs and Sufi shrines. There was a need to reach out to such an audience.

Methodology of the Study

The study is qualitative and descriptive. Biographies, Hagiography and historical works have been used in this study. Biographical sketches (Tadhkiras), letters (Maktubat) and Utterances and Discourses (Malfuzat) of the Sufi saints have been used. Sufi Khanqahs were a main source of gathering information not only in written form but also in stories of legends. The folklore of Bihar also is used in this study. The Khanqahs of Bihar Sharif and Phulwarisharif were visited by the researcher. The researcher cannot explain in words the amazing feeling, when he visited the tombs of the distinguished Sufis.

Limitations of the Study

My knowledge of Sufism may not be obsolete. The knowledge of religious and social conditions may be inadequate. Though the researcher referred to Maktubat and Malfuzat's of

Sufi's, there may be other sources too which were not referred. There was a paucity of concrete data and documentary material. Lastly, I am responsible for any errors committed in this study.

Features of the study

The study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter gives an overall account of Sufism and Sufi literature. Various definitions, concepts and orders of Sufism have been discussed in this chapter along with the lives and works of prominent Sufis of the world.

The second chapter will focus on introducing the prominent Sufis of Bihar and their overall contribution to literature and other subjects. Sufis of Bihar belonged to chief orders of Chistia, Shharwardia, Qadiria, Firdausia, Madariya and Shuttaria. All these orders have been thoroughly discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter will deal with the social and cultural scenario of Bihar as reflected in the writings of Sufis of Bihar. Various aspects of social, religious and education are being analyzed in this chapter. Indian cultural influences have also been described in this chapter.

The last and forth chapter will be a critical study of Sufi Persian literature of Bihar. This chapter had been subdivided into two sections-Prose and Poetry. The lives and works of all prominent Sufis of Bihar are analyzed in this chapter. The researcher considers this chapter as the most important chapter of the work.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION TO SUFISM AND SUFISTIC LITERATURE

The mystic saints and Sufis played a very important part in shaping the character of Islamic thought in Bihar and elsewhere. Before proceeding to understand the role of Sufis of Bihar in the development of Persian Language in Bihar, the researcher views that it is necessary to first discuss the main tenets and various aspects of Sufism and Sufi literature. We will start with understanding the concept of Sufism and proceed further to analyze the various debates on the origin of Sufism.

Sufism was a common appellation of all Muslims who wanted to attain knowledge of, get nearer to, and find union with God, through certain spiritual experiences and devotional exercises and not by mere observance of empty rituals and outward formalities. As a Muslim, a Sufi believes in the Unitarian God of the Quran, saying there is no God but God or but one God, the lord of the world and not a God of any particular nation, but he also attempts to reconcile it with pantheistic unification which implies that there is nothing but God.

The distinctive characteristics of Sufis have been love, liberalism, latitudinarianism and eclecticism. The main aim of a Sufi is to attain the one reality diffused over the universe. A Sufi considers human life as a journey and himself as a traveler (Salik), a seeker of God. He sets out in the quest of God by slow stages (Manzil or Maqamat), the first of which is humanity (Nasut) in which he must live by action confirming to the cannon law (Shariat) and precepts and practices of Islam. The second stage is considered to be angelic in nature (Malakut) which he reaches by keen perception and meditation and through the pathway of purity (Tariqat). The third stage is passing through power by requisitioning the aid of knowledge or Gnosis (Marifat), he attains the truth of reality (Haqiqat) which is the stage of Lahut (absorption in divinity). Hafiz says “Miyani-ashiq-o-mashuq hech ha’il neest: tu khud hijab-i-khudi hafiz az meyan barkhez” (Nothing stands between the lover and the beloved. You are your own curtain, oh hafiz! remove that)¹. Annihilation or self effacement (Fana) does not imply the end of the Sufi ‘ways’ for it leads to eternal abiding in God (Baqaa bad-al-fana)

¹ Arnold, Thomas, ‘Saints and Martyrs: Muhammadans in India, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, (1911), Vol.11, Pgs.68-73.

A review of Sufism would disclose that it does not have a compact definite definition. The main reason for the lack of a compact definition lies in fact that since inception till date it seems to be experimental, individual, pertaining to different perceptions and emotions which makes it further difficult to bind the term into a specific definition. Another reason why scholars could not agree on a specific definition for Sufism lies in the fact that there was no specific ingredients and consistent shape attached to it during a particular period of history. During early Islam Sufism was confined primarily in the periphery of Zuhd (Renunciation) and Taqwa whereas a number of other elements kept attaching to it as time passed by, making it further difficult to find a specific and compact definition to it. However it would be pertinent to mention some of the definitions put forward by various scholars and great Sufi saints themselves. It would help in developing an understanding of Sufism and various aspects attached to it.

Since my thesis focuses on the contributions of the Sufis of Bihar, let me begin with what Hazrat Makhdoom-e-Jehan Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri writes on this topic in his Maktub No. 25:

"طریقت راہے است کہ از شریعت خیزد و شریعت بیان توحید و طہارت و نماز و روزہ و حج و جہاد و زکوٰۃ و دیگر احکام شرع و معاملات است۔ اماں طریقت طلب کردن بحقیقت این معاملات است و تفحص کردن این مشروعات و آراستن اعمال بصفا ضمانت و تطہیر اخلاق است از کدورات طبعی چون ریا و ہوا و جفا و شرک مانند این در جملہ ہرچہ بہ تہذیب و تطہیر ظاہر تعلق دارد شریعت است و ہرچہ بہ تصفیہ و تزکیہ باطن تعلق دارد طریقت است۔ مثلاً جائے نماز را طاہر کردن از لویث بخاست شریعت است و دل پاک کردن از کدورات بشریت طریقت است پیش از نماز وضو کردن شریعت است و ہمیشہ با وضو بودن طریقت است، در نماز رونے قبلہ آوردن شریعت است در وے دل بحق آوردن طریقت است در جملہ ہرچہ در مرتبہ حواس فرود آید، رعایت آن کردن از شریعت است و ہرچہ دروہ پردہ قالب است رعایت کردن آن طریقت است و ہرچہ انبیاء علیہم السلام امت خود را آن فرمائند کہ خود کنند۔"²

In the abovementioned lines Hazrat Maneri has defined and explained the concept of Shariat and Tariqat in a very beautiful manner.

² Maneri, Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya, Maktubat-e-Sadi Maktub No. 25 Dar Arakan-e-Shriyat-o-Tariqat

Kashful Mehjub which is among the oldest and the most authentic writings on mysticism, touches upon this topic in following fashion:

"مردمان اندر تحقیق این اسم بسیار سخن گفته اند و کتب ساخته و گروہے از آن گفته اند کہ صوفی را برائے آن صوفی خوانده اند کہ جامہ صوف دار دو گروہے گفته اند کہ صوفی را از برائے آن صوفی خواندند کہ از صف اول باشد و گروہے گفته اند کہ بدان صوفی گویند کہ تولا بہ اصحاب صفہ رضی اللہ عنہم کردہ اند و گروہے گفته اند کہ این اسم از صفا مشتق است و ہر کسے را اندرین معنی تحقیق این طریقت لطائف بسیار است۔"³

Hazrat Makhdoom-e-Jehan Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri in his book, Sharh-e-Aadabul Muridian uses the following lines to describe Sufism:

"التصوف ماخوذ من الصفا والصفاء محمود فی کل لسان، صفا ستودہ شدہ است در ہمہ زبانہا و ضدہ الکدورہ و ضد صفا کدورت است و آن مذموم است در ہمہ زبانہا در خبر است از پیغامبر علیہ السلام فرمود کہ ذہب الصفاء من الدنیا و بقیت الکدورہ فالموت تحفہ للمسلم، گفت صفا از دنیا برفت و باقی ماند کدورت پس مرگ امروز تحفہ بود مر ہر مسلمانی را پس این نام از صفا خاست و غالب شدہ است مر این طائفہ را تا گویند رجل صوفی و مر جماعت ایشان را صوفیہ گویند و مر کسی را کہ خود را بدیشان پیوند اند متصوف خواندند و مر جماعت ایشان را متصوفہ گویند و نیز میگویند کہ این نام را مشاہد نیست از روئے عربیت نہ قیاسی نہ اشتقانی و اظہر ان است کہ این لفظ بر طریق لقب است از بہر صفا کہ در ایشان است۔"⁴

Shaikh Ali Hujwari, the author of Kashful Mahjub has categories Sufis in three broad terms namely: Sufi, Motasawwuf and Mastaswuf. He describes this in following words:

"صوفی آن بود کہ از خود فانی بود و حق باقی و از قبضہ طبائع رستہ بحق پیوستہ۔ متصوف بمجاہدہ این درجہ را ہمی طلبد و اندر طلب خود را بر معاملات ایشان درست ہمی کند و متصوف آنکہ برائے برائے مال و منال و جاہ و دنیا خود را مانند ایشان کردہ و ازین ہر دو چیز بیچ خبرے ندارد تا حدے کہ گفته اند المستصوف عندالصوفیاء کالذباب و عند غیرہم کالذباب۔ مستصوف بہ نزدیک صوفی اند

³ Ali Hijwiri, Makhdum, Kashf al Muhjub, page 22

⁴ Maneri, Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya, Sharh-e-Adabul Muridain, Page 93

حقیرے چوں مگس بود آنچه کنند نزدیک ولی بوس بود و نزدیک دیگران چون گرگ بے اختیار بود کہ
ہمتش لخت مردار بود۔⁵

Sufism went through considerable development and modification as the Muslims came into contact with people of other races and cultures in course of their history. Consequently, what came to be known as Sufism later on must be distinguished from what Sufism was in its early days. When we look at some early writers of the first and second/seventh and eighth centuries for example Quashiri and Hujwiri we find their understanding of Sufism.

One of the first things that Quashiri emphasizes regarding a Sufi is that he is absolutely convinced that of all paths of life open to a man his path is the best. This is how Qushairi expresses it: "And the grounds on which their path was built were stronger than the grounds on which the paths of others were established, be they men of tradition and culture, or men of thought and intellect"⁶.

Shihab al-din Suharwardi the founder of Suharwardi sect, views that the term Sufi is etymologically derived from "Suf", the coarse woolen cloth which he says, was worn by the holy prophet.⁷ He enumerates several other views which are as follows:

- The Sufis are those who stand in the first rank (Saff) before God.
- The word was originally Safawi and was later changed into Sufi
- It was derived from Suffah, the mound where a group of Muslims used to spend their time in religious training and ascetic way of life.

According to Suharwardi, the derivations are etymologically incorrect, though with regard to the third it may be said that the life led by the people of the Suffah resembled the pattern of life adopted by the Sufis. He also refers to a particular group of people of Khurasan who used to live in caves far off from inhabited plains. They were called Shaguffiyyah, from Shaguft, the name of the cave. The people of Syria used to call them Jau'iyyah.

⁵ Ali Hijwiri, Makhdum, Kashf al Muhjub, page 25

⁶ Al-Qushairi, al-Risalatal-Qushairiyyah, Daral-Kutub al- 'Arabiyyah al-Kubra, Misr, 1330 A.H., Pg.2.

⁷ Thomas, Op.Cit.

CHAPTER-1

*INTRODUCTION TO SUFISM AND
SUFISTIC LITERATURE*

Similarly Suharwardi tries to establish an intimate relationship between Sufism and knowledge. According to him, knowledge that is followed by moral behaviour is the main characteristic of Sufi line. Such knowledge is called by him as Fiqh which is not used in usual legal sense but for spiritual status of man is solely based on knowledge.⁸ He refers to several Quranic verses to prove this point. First he Quotes the verse; “He (God) taught man what he did not know,” and concludes that the spiritual insight into religion is solely based on knowledge. Secondly, he holds that Sufis are the people who acquire spiritual insight into religion and this helps them lead people to the right path. This spiritual perception, according to him, pertains to the sphere of the heart and not to the sphere of the head. He argues that according to Quran, knowledge and moral uprightness are the characteristics of the truly learned people. He holds that knowledge is the consequence of Taqwa,”those of his servants only who are possessed of knowledge have Taqwa.”⁹ This verse is very significant in establishing the relationship between knowledge and moral behaviour, for as Suharwardi puts it, it excludes knowledge from those who are not characterized by moral integrity. (Taqwa)

Sufism for Suharwardi is characterized by two things. It consists in following the practices of holy prophet (Sunnah) and in inculcating purity of motives and attaining the highest integrity of character. There are two different categories of Sufis. The first includes those persons in whom mystic illumination (Kashf) is followed by exercise of personal effort (Ijtihad). He quotes the example of Pharaohs magicians. When they realized the spiritual illumination as a result of which they decided there and then break with the Pharaoh in favour of Moses. This decision of theirs for which they willingly bore all terrible consequences with which the Pharaoh threatened them came to them with an ease that follows spiritual illumination. To the second category belong those people who lead a hard ascetic life spending, their days in prayers and nights in meditation. It is only after a long struggle spread over days, months and years that they receive divine illumination. Here illumination is the fruit and crown of personal efforts and hard ascetic life. He Quotes a saying of Junaid “We did not gain access to the domain of Sufism through discursive reasoning or intellectual

⁸ Suhrawardi, S.D., Awarif al-Madraif, Urdu Translation, Naval Kishore Press, Lucknow, Chp 1, P.17.

⁹ Quran, XXX5, 28 Quoted in Sharif (ed) A History of Muslim Philosophy, Low Price Publications, New Delhi, Pg.355.

discussion but through hunger, abdication of wordly lust and prestige and discarding of even unlawful things.”¹⁰

The Sufi has to undergo a long course of austere and exacting disciplines prescribed by a spiritual preceptor, called Shaikh, Pir or Murshid to whom he must surrender himself completely. The rules and the methods of devotion inculcated by the Shaikh and followed by the disciples called ‘Murid’ constitute the ‘Way’ or Tariqah of the Sufi. He has to fight against the temptations of the flesh and carnal desires (Nafs) and practice puritanical abstinence from worldly pleasures and enjoyments. Repentance and conversion (Tauba), renunciation (Zuhd), poverty (Faqr) patience and resignation (Sabr-o-riza), trust in God (Tawakkul) contentment (Qanaat). Humility (Inkisar) charity and contentment (Jud-o Sakha), good disposition (Khulq) etc., are the virtues he has to cultivate. By self-restraint and living a life of isolation and withdrawal from the world (Khalwat wa uzla) he keeps his heart pure and rids himself of evil habits. Meditation and concentration on God (Muraqaba), self examination (Muhasaba), self mortification (Riyzat) and above all remembrance of the names and attributes of God’s name and attributes of God (Dhikr) which means repeated recital of God’s name in rapid cadence with physical movements and restraints of breaths are some of the distinctive forms of Sufi’s devotions. The devotional exercises were very often and specially among the ‘Chistis’ and the ‘Suhrawardis’, accompanied by religious songs and ecstatic movements of the body called dances.

The Sufi represents himself as entirely devoted to the search for truth and thinks that there may be partial truth in all the different religions of the world. He holds that the foundation of all the religious beliefs must be essentially true. The different forms of worship result from a variety of names and attributes by which God reveals himself in the creation. In the words of the celebrated 13th century Chisti saint of Delhi, Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia , once observed “Every nation has its own way, its own faith, its own place turned to when at prayer” (“Har quam rast rahe dine wa qiblagah”). The 14th century Sufi saints of Amber (Bihar) of the Suharwardi order, H.Amber Chirmposh, (d.775) composed many verses which emphasized the essential oneness of all schools of thoughts – all creeds and the importance of love for the mystics. In one of his mystic ghazals he wrote “Ishq ra rahnuma, yake didam”; ke munazah ze

¹⁰ Op.Cit,Awarif al-Madrif, Chp 9, Pg.21.

Kufr-o-din didam (I saw love as one and the true guide. I found it free from faith and infidelity.)¹¹

The Sufi, with his fervent love of and devotion to the one eternal reality, imminent in all things and known through divine illumination and grace, with his belief in the moral exaltation of life in pursuit of duty, with his idea of ascetism, seclusion, control and regulation of breath, repetition of divine names, and with his frenzied devotion through singing, dancing and music, found a fruitful soul to thrive in India, the land of the Vedanta, yoga and Bhakti, more than elsewhere.

Certain points of resemblances between Indian systems and Islamic mysticism have led astray some people who are inclined to father the one on the other. Some have gone so far as to think that Sufism owes its origin mainly to the schools of Indian philosophy. Parallel philosophical conceptions are pointed out and striking points of contrast between vedantism and Sufism are emphasized upon by those who take such ecstatic utterance of Husain Mansoor Halaj and Bayazid Bostami as “Anal Haque” (I am the truth) “I went from God to God, until he cried, from me to me o thou I”. Glory to me! How great is my majesty” to be the echoes of the vedantic and upanishadic ideas and expressions like “Tat twam asi (thou art), Ekam Advaitam’ (one without the second), ‘Aham Brahma Asmi’ (I am the supreme spirit). The author of the dabistan is quoted to say that the Sufi holds that God alone exists and besides him there is no reality. As in the Indian thought there is said to be in Sufism the same emanation of all things from one supreme and the same final absorption of all things from one supreme and the same final absorption of all things into the divine essence.¹²

The Buddhist nirvana is said to be practically the same as the Sufistic doctrine of fana or self effacement whose first exponent was the saint, Bayazid Bustami, a grandson of a Persian magi, and a pupil of Abu Ali Sindhi. The Sufi concept of the world of phenomena and of senses as mere mirage or mirror or reflection is said to be something like Maya. Some even mark a tendency to the belief in metempsychosis in the Sufi doctrine of ‘Successive existences’ and a line from Mathnavi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, “Haft sad haftad qalib dida am hamchu

¹¹ Askari, S.H. 1989, Islam and Muslims in Medieval Bihar, Khudabaksh Library, Patna, Pg.7.

¹² Sharif, Op.Cit Pg.345.

sabza bar-ha royeeda am” (I have witnessed seven hundred and seventy forms- I have grown so many times as the vegetable plants) is quoted in this connection. Legendary tales of prince beggar, Ibrahim Bin Adham (the ancestor of the Balkhi saints of Bihar) and of the begging bowl reminds such people of the Gautama theory and Buddhistic influences are traced in the rise of monastic establishments of Khanqah, in the institution of religious orders, the system of Maqamat or stations on the road of beatitude and the use of rosary with 90 beads. Parallel ascetic discipline, and corresponding methods of spiritual culture are found in ‘Dhikr’ or ‘Jap’ ‘Pas-i-Anfas’ or Pranayama, Muraqaba or Samadhi, ‘Jalsa’ or Asan. The idea of Awalim-i-sab or the seven worlds of the Sufi is considered as analogous to sapta loka and resemblance is found between ‘Wali’ or ‘Arhat’, ‘Insan-i-Kamil’ or ‘Tatha gata’. The veneration of spiritual teachers, Saints, Pirs and Murshids as a sure and certain mediatory agency is taken to be comparable to the blind obedience to and veneration of the Hindu guru. Procession and pilgrimages to tombs are said to hold much more important place in the estimation of the Indian Muslims than elsewhere¹³.

The main Sufi orders of India are, established by distinguished Sufi Saints like the Qadriya from Abdul Qadri Jilani, Naqshbandi from Khwaja Bahauddil Naqshband, Chisti from Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, Suharwardi from Khwaja Shahabuddin Shaharwardi. Several other orders were later founded. The main orders named here dominated the Islamic World for many centuries. Each order contributed immensely in the spread and development of Islam. The earliest Sufis of Bihar consisted of the Chisti order, some of the earliest being Shah Mahmud Bihari and Saiyid Taju’d Din of Danapur, the disciples of Qutbu’d Din Bakhtiyar Kaki (d 633-1235), Maulana Ali Bihari, a disciple of Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar(d.644-1246), Makhdum Adam Sufi (d 686-1287), son of Saiyid Ibrahim Chisti, of which later became Hajipur (d.657-1258) and his son, Makhdum Hamidu’d Din(d.771-1369) and the latter’s son, Taimullah Sufaid Baz (D.790-1388) the spiritual guide of Shaikh Faidullah of Kurji near Patna (d.831-1427); Shamsu’d Din of Chandhan’s (Biharsharif) (d.820-1418).

Some of the prominent Sufis of Suharwadi order were Shaikh Jalal Tabrizi, one of the chief disciples of the celebrated author of ‘Awarifu’l-Ma’arif, Shihabu’d Din Suhrawadi, came to Bihar via Delhi and Badaun, and from there he went to Bengal and Sylhet where his Chilla

¹³ Askari, S.H, Op Cit, Pg.9.

Khana is still found and who is also known as Sharfuddin Maneri. Maulana Taqiu'd Din Suhrawadi of Mahsun (Dinajpur, Bengal), the author of Multaqit which is an abridged version of Ghazzali's Ihyau'l 'Ulum, Taqlu'd Din was the inspirer of many Suhrawadi saints of Bihar, including Makhdum Yahya Maneri, the father of the celebrated Firdausi saint, Makhdum Sharfu'd-Din Maneri.

I would like to now focus on the various debates regarding the diverse opinions on the origin of Sufism. The following section will discuss this feature.

Origin of Sufism

There are innumerable theories regarding the origin of Sufism and scholars differ in assessing the extent of the various extra non-Islamic elements in its making. Some of them, as has been pointed out by scholars like Dr.Arberry are mutually contradictory. Points of contact between Christianity and Sufism have been detected. It has been suggested that the earlier Arabian type of Sufism was quietism and ascetism which was influenced by Christian monasticism. The earliest Sufi is said to be like Hindu ascetics and hermits. But it is also said that the Muslim conception of Allah with his majesty, awe and vengeance over-shadow the attributes of mercy and love. In the Islamic idea of God and Satan, the Zarathushtra conception of dualism and belief in the perpetual conflict between good and evil, light and darkness has been discovered. But in Islam good and evil are two separate things and not two phases of Godhead.¹⁴

Some have described Sufism as an Iranian reaction to the Arabian faith. E.H.Palmer has tried to show that Sufism is really the development of the primeval religions of the Aryan races. Those who believed in the Aryan reaction theory say that anti-Semitic reaction took two forms, Persian and Indian. Browne says that there is no historical proof that India had any direct influence on early Sufism. But the Persian theory which refers to the introduction of pantheistic element in Islam also cannot explain the whole situation. Some of the early Sufis were not of Persian nationality and some of the pioneers of Islamic mysticism were Arabs and natives of

¹⁴ Askari, S.H. Islam and Muslims in Medieval Bihar, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. Pg.11.

Syria, Egypt and Spain.¹⁵ Then there are the advocates of the Neo-Platonistic theory which is said to explain the origin of Sufism more adequately than other theories. Plotinus, the Egyptian (203-207 A.D.) who reinterpreted the philosophy of Plato and Dionysius, the Syrian monk who developed a mystical theosophy based on Hellenic sources are said to have been the inspirers of the philosophy of Sufis. But some scholars have raised the question as to what elements of their philosophy did the Neo-Platonists originally borrow from the east, Persia and India? Does not their philosophy of ultimate reality and the restless soul aspiring to gain its basic unity with the supreme one suggest the influence of oriental cults.

There is definite and adequate historical evidence is lacking to prove that Islamic Mysticism was a product of foreign culture, Greek or Neo-Platonic ideas, Christian asceticism and monasticism, Persian and Zoroastrian beliefs, and Indian or Buddhistic and Hindu principles, practices and influences. Some like Massignon, Clarke, etc hold that Sufism must be sought in the Quranic words which lend themselves to mystical and spiritual interpretations. The tendency to mystical life which is not confined to this or that people was not lacking in Arabian Islam of the first two centuries. Considering the universality of human mind which is essentially one despite the barriers of distance, time and tradition, there is nothing surprising if common notions are found to run parallel in the minds of the different peoples. Similarity and unconscious coincidences need not necessarily be taken to connote borrowing or indebtedness. A like cause may give rise to a like result. Political strife's, social turmoil, and worldly outlook began in Islam soon after the death of second Caliph and became aggravated under the rule of the materialistic Ummayyads of Damascus. The disgust felt at the existing state of things soon assumed a sort of spiritual revolt of which one phase was a revolt against the cold formalism. Ritualism and traditionalism of rigid orthodoxy. Even European scholars admit that the seeds of Sufism are to be found in the powerful and widely spread tendencies which arose within Islam during the first century and it was not till the third century of the Hijra that the non-Islamic influences began to affect the character of Sufism.

The advocates of the Esoteric Islam theory or the theory of the independent origin or spontaneous growth trace the origin of Sufism from the life time of the Prophet and see its natural development within the framework of Islam, it being only the esoteric aspects (with

¹⁵ Askari., Op.Cit, Pg.11.

emphasis on hidden or 'Batin' rather than apparent or 'Zahir' or literal meanings of the Quran) of that great religion. They bring out the examples of such companions of the Prophet as Uthman Bin Maazun, Abu Dhar Ghifari, Tamim-ad-dari, Abu-darda and a host of others who gave the first impulse to Islamic mysticism because they not only denounced but also renounced worldly wealth and carnal desires, lived solely for God and raised their voices against what they considered to be the growth of the grossly materialistic and disgustingly impious and irreligious outlook of the people. These (men of God) have been variously called as Hab-i-safa (Purity) Saff (bench) Suffa (Row) and Soof (Wool) and came to be styled, in course of time as Sufis. The derivation of the word from the Greek 'Sophist' is repudiated and the expression 'Labesa-as-suf' (clad in wool) is considered preferable. The word Sufi in its theosophical connotation first appears in the middle of the eighth century when it was definitely applied to a certain class of ascetics and quietists who were clad in wool and practiced austerities. According to Jami, Abu Hashim Kufi was the first to get the name 'Sufi' in 150=766. Even a little earlier than him flourished the famous Sufi, Hsan-al-Basri (D, 110=728) and it is from him through Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, that almost all important Sufi orders trace their origin.

The early Sufis believed that once he had set the pattern of his life in the mould of the attitudes and relations, he was ready to make a start in realizing his ultimate ambition namely the ambition of experiencing God in such a way that he might be able to say like every Sufi: "What for others is just a matter of conjecture and vague hypothesis is for him there like the most certain entity, and what for others is a matter of conceptual understanding of God is for him something to be experienced as an existent about the reality of which there can be no possible doubt, so that he can sing with the poet:

"My night is aglow with the beauteous grandeur of the face,
While the darkness of night envelops everyone else,
While others are enshrouded in the pitch darkness of night,
I am experiencing the brilliant light of the day".¹⁶

¹⁶ Abu al-Qasim Al-Qushairi, *al-risalat al-Qushairiyyah*, Darul Kutub, Misr, 1130 A.H., Op.Cit., Pg.180.

Some famous orders of Sufism

There are more than 200 orders known orders, some being local and others as universal. Some are rural and others are urban in locale. Some of the main Sufi orders are:

The Qadiriya: Also called “Ummul Salasil” (Mother of Silsilas), it is the oldest and most widespread order. It has branches all over the world loosely tied to its centre at Baghdad. It was founded in Baghdad by ‘Abdal-Qadir Jilani (d.1166), who is considered to be the greatest saint in Islam. It later established itself in Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, The Maghreb, Central Asia and India. The Qadiriya stresses piety, humility, moderation and philanthropy and appeals to all classes of society being strictly orthodox. It is governed by a descendant of Al-Jilani who is also the keeper of his tomb in Baghdad which is a pilgrimage centre for its followers from all over the world. Hazrat Abdul Wahab (RA), Hazrat Abdul Razzaq (RA), Hazrat Abdul Aziz Bin Abdul Qadir Jilani (RA), Hazrat Abdul Qadir Najibuddin Suharwardi (RA), Hazrat Sheikhul Shuyukh (RA) , Hazrat Ibrahimul Muqaddasi (RA) were the main contributors to the growth, development and propagation of this silsila. It is said that one of the sons of Hazrat Abdal-Qadir Jilani (RA) also came to Sindh and his tomb is also located in Sindh. Hazrat Syed Ahmad Amjhari (RA), Hazrat Qamis Qadiri (RA), Hazrat Pir Mujibullah (RA) etc. were among the most prominent Sufis who propagated the philosophy and concepts of Qadiriya Silsila in Bihar. In Mughal period, Hazrat Sheikh Muhadith Dehlavi (RA) gave immense rise to this Silsilas.

The Jilaliya: It is a Qadiri branch in the Maghreb worship. Al-jilani who worships Al-Jilani as a supernatural being, combining Sufism with pre-Islamic ideas and practices.

The Naqshbandiya: It was founded in Central Asia in the thirteenth century in an attempt to defend Islam against the ravages of the Mongol invasions and spread to the Indian subcontinent. The Naqshbandis tried to control the political rulers so as to ensure that they implemented God’s will. They were politically and culturally active; the great poet Mirdad (d 1785) belonged to this order. They were also connected to the trade and crafts guild and held political power in fifteenth century Central Asia and in Moghul India. A Naqshbandi branch Khalwawiyah, had an important part in efforts to modernize the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Naqshbandi developed mainly as an urban order with close links to the orthodox hierarchy. They recite the Dhikr silently, ban music, dance and prefer contemplation to customs. The middle way between extreme asceticism and extreme antinomianism seemed acceptable to the orthodox hierarchy. They have been involved in underground movements against Soviet rule in Central Asia and supported the Afghan Mujahideen against the Russians.

The main propagator of this silsilas in India was Hazrat Khwaja Baqi Billah, who contributed a lot to the growth and development of this Silsila. The second prominent name related to this Silsila in India is of Hazrat Imam Rabbani Mujaddid Alf e Thani Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Farooqi Hindi (RA) who also made huge contribution to the promotion of this Silsila. His contributions could be assessed with the fact that this Silsila also got famous by the name of Silsils-e- Mujadadiya Naqshbandiya.

The Mawlawiyah: This order was founded by Jalal-din-rumi (d.1273) who is called as the greatest Sufi poet who wrote in Persian. Their rituals are aestically sophisticated and their saran is famous for exquisite combination of music, poetry and whirling dance. In the west they are called as 'Whirling Dervishes' which transports them into a trance like state. The Mawlawiyah were especially attractive to the educated elite of the Turkish Ottoman empire and were wide spread in Anatolia where they had close links with the authorities.

The Bektashiya: It is a syncretic order whose ritual and beliefs are a mixture of Shiism, Orthodox Christianity and Gnostic cults. By the 16th century Bektashis were the order of the famous janissary corps, the elite military unit of the Ottoman Empire. Their magic like rituals appealed to the illiterate masses of Anatolia. Their clergy were celibate, they practiced ritual confession and communion and had a Trinitarian concept of God similar to that of the Alawis.

The Tijaniya: it was founded by Al-Tijani in 1781 in Fez, Morocco. It extended the borders of Islam towards Senegal, Nigeria and founded great kingdom in West Africa. They taught submission to the established Government and their influence is still an important factor in the countries where it is associated with conservative businessmen.

The Daraquiya: was founded in the early 19th century by Arabi Darqawi (d.1823) in Morocco. It was the driving force behind the Jehadi movement which achieved mass conversions to Islam

in the mixed Berber-Arab-Negro lands of the Sahel. It is influential today in Mali, Niger, and Chad and still influential in Morocco.

The Khalwatiya: was founded in North West Persia in the 13th century and spread to the Caucasus and to Turkey. It was closely associated with the Ottoman sultans and had its headquarters in Istanbul. It has also spread to Egypt and Indonesia. The origin of this Silsila is associated with Hazrat Sheikh Mohammad Khilawati (RA). The main propagator of this Silsila was Hazrat Sheikh Muzaffar Katkani Nishapuri (RA), however, the Silsila remained confined to a very limited area.

The Suhrawardiya: the founder of this order is Shihab-Al-Din Suhrawadi. His wisdom of Ishraqi has played such a great role in the intellectual and spiritual life of Islam and especially of Shi'ism. He was born in Suhrawadi, a village near the present city of Zinjan in Northern Persia, in 1153 A.D.¹⁷. Having finished his formal studies, he began to travel through Persia, meeting various Sufi masters and benefiting from their presence and teachings. During this period, he spent much time in meditation and invocation in spiritual retreats. He also journeyed during the same period through the regions of Anatolia and Syria and acquired great love for the cities of these countries. On one of his journeys, he went from Damascus to Aleppo and met Malik Zahir, the son of Salah-al-Din Ayyubi, the celebrated Muslim ruler. Malik Zahir became more devoted to Shihab al Din and asked him to stay at his court. It was here that the master of Ishraq fell into disgrace with the religious authorities in the city who considered some of his statements dangerous to Islam. They asked for his death and when Malik Zahir refused, they petitioned Salah al-Din himself who threatened his son to abdication unless he followed the ruling of the religious leaders. Shihab al-Din was thereby imprisoned and in the year 1191 A.D. at the age of 38, he was either suffocated to death or died of starvation¹⁸. There are nearly fifty titles of Suhrawardi's writings which have come down to us in the various histories and biographies. They may be divided into five categories as follows¹⁹:

1. The four large doctrinal treatises, the first three dealing with Aristotelian (Masha'i) philosophy with certain modifications and the last with Ishraqi wisdom proper. These

¹⁷ Sharif, Op. Cit. Pg. 373.

¹⁸ Corbin, 1952. *Suhrawardi d'Alep Fondateur De La Doctrine Illuminative (Ishraqi)*, Maisonneuve, Paris, Pg.373.

¹⁹ Corbin, 1945 *Maarif Mathaasi*, Bibliotheca Islamica, Istanbul, Pg.xvi.

works, all in Arabic, include the Talwihat, Muqawwamat, Mutarahat, and the Hikmat al-Ishraq.

2. Shorter doctrines treatises like Hayakil-al-Nur, Al-Alwah al- Imadiyyah, Partau-Nameh, I'tiqad al- Hukama, al- Lamahat, Yazadan Shinakht and Bustan al-Qulub all of which explain further the subject matter of the larger treatises. These works are partly in Arabic and partly in Persian.
3. Initiatory narratives written in symbolic language to depict the journey of the initiate towards Gnosis (Marifah) and Illumination (Ishraq). These short treatises, all written in Persian, include 'Aql-i-Surkh, Awaz-i-par-i-Jibrail, al-Ghurbat al Gharbiyyah (also in Arabic), Lughat-i-Muran, Risalah Fi Halat al- Tufuliyyah, Ruzi ba Jamaat-I Sufiyan, Risalah fi al Mi-raj and Safir-i-Simurgh
4. commentaries and transcriptions of earlier philosophic and initiatic texts and sacred scriptures like the translation into Persian of the Risalat-al-Ta'ir of Ibn Sina, the commentary upon the verses of the Quran and on Hadith
5. Prayers, litanies, invocations and what may be called books of the hour, all of which Shahrazuri calls al-Waridat w-al-Taqdisat.

These works and the large number of commentaries written upon them during the last seven centuries form the main corpus of the tradition of Ishraq and are a treasure of traditional doctrines and symbols combining in them the wisdom of Sufism with Hermeticism and Pythagorean, Platonic, Aristotelian and Zoroastrian philosophies together with some diverse elements.

The famous Suhrawardi saint, Shaikh Jalal Tabrizi, one of the chief disciples of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi came to Bihar via Delhi and Badaun and from here he went to Bengal where his 'Chillakhanas' are still found. Bihar also felt the influence of the Suhrawardi order through the activities of the followers of Syed Jalal Bukhari Makhdoom Jahanian (1383 A.D) and of still earlier, the celebrated Bahauddin Zakaria Multani. Makhdoom Syed Hasan, a contemporary of Humayun and Shershah, after whom Hasanpura in Saran district is named, and his sons and grandsons, Syed Ahmad of Hajipur, Syed Muhammad of Mansurgabj, Patna and Syed Husain of Bhagalpur all called 'Pir Damaria' were Suhrawardia saints and were linked in the chain of spiritual disciplineship to Makhdoom Jahanian. Maulana Ahmad

Damishqi, one of the 'Khalifas' of Bahauddin Zakaria Multani was the spiritual guide of Maulana Taqiuddin Suhrawardi of Mahsum in Bengal, who was the author of an abridged version of 'Ihya-ul-ulum' of the celebrated Imam Ghazzali and he was the inspirer of many Suhrawardi saints of Bihar including Makhdum Yahya Maneri, the father of the renowned Makhdum Sharfuddin the greatest muslim saint that Bihar has produced.

The Rifatiya: was founded in the marshlands of South Iraq by Al-Rifai (d.1187). They stressed poverty, abstinence and mortification of the flesh and are also known as the 'Howling Dervishes' because of their loud recitation of the Dhikr. They focus on dramatic rituals and bizarre feats such as fire eating and piercing themselves by sharp objects.

The Shadiliya: It was started by Al-Shadili (d.1258) in Tunis. It flourished specially in Egypt under other names. The Shadiliya stress the intellectual basis of Sufism and allow their members to remain involved in the secular world. They are not allowed to beg and are always neatly dressed. They appealed mainly to the middle class in Egypt and are still active there. It is said that Shadiliya were the first to discover the value of Coffee as a means of staying awake during nights of prayer.

The Chishtiya: Hazrat Abu Is'haq Chishti (RA) is understood to have been the founder of this order; however, Prince Dara Shikoh in his book Safinat-ul-Auliya names Hazrat Khwaja Ahmad Abu Ahmad Chishti (RA), one of the disciples and successor of Hazrat Abu Is'haq, as the "Sardar" of this order. This order originated in Chisht (currently in Afghanistan), and reached India after passing through Sanjan, Damascus, Sajistan, Khorasan, and Nishapur. In India it was founded by Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, India. His teaching was simple and the order is known for its fervour and hospitality. This order helped in the Islamization of the Indian subcontinent. Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, Bakhtiyar Kaki, Fariduddin Ganjshakar and Amir Khusrau are some famous Sufi Saints of Chishtiya order.

Hazrat Mu'nuddin Chishtī was born in 536 A.H./1141 CE, in Sistan in Persian Khurasan, modern Iran. He is a descendant of Muhammad through Ja'far as Sadique. He grew up in a Persian family. His parents died when he was only fifteen years old. He inherited a windmill and an orchard from his father. During his childhood, the young Mu'nuddin was different from

others and kept himself busy in prayers and meditation. Legend has it that once when he was watering his plants, a revered Sufi; Shaikh Ibrahim Qundūzī came to his orchard. Young Mu'īnuddīn approached him and offered him some fruits. In return, Sheikh Ibrahim Qundūzī gave him a piece of bread and asked him to eat it. The Khwaja got enlightened and found himself in a strange world after eating the bread. After this he disposed of his property and other belongings and distributed the money to the poor. He renounced the world and left for Bukhara in search of knowledge and higher education. Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī visited the seminaries of Samarkand and Bukhara, and acquired religious learning at the feet of eminent scholars of his age. He visited nearly all the great centers of Muslim culture, and acquainted himself with almost every important trend in Muslim religious life in the Middle Ages. He became a disciple of the Chishtī saint 'Uthmān Hārūnī. They traveled the Middle East extensively together, including visits to Makkah and Medina.

Mu'īnuddīn's Journey to India

TH-18653
Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī turned towards India, reputedly after a dream in which Prophet Muhammad blessed him to do so. After a brief stay at Lahore, he reached Ajmer along with Mohammad of Ghori, and settled down there. In Ajmer, he attracted a substantial following, acquiring a great deal of respect amongst the residents of the city. Mu'īnuddīn Chishtī practiced the Sufi Sulh-e-Kul (*peace to all*) concept to promote understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Founding of the Chishtī Order in India

He apparently never wrote down his teachings in the form of a book, nor did his immediate disciples, but he laid the foundations of the Chishti order in the city of Ajmer in North India. His firm faith in Wahdat al-Wujūd (Unity of Being) provided the necessary ideological support to his holy mission to bring about emotional integration of the people amongst whom he lived.

The central principles that became characteristics of the Chishti order in India are based on his teachings and practices. They lay stress on renunciation of material goods; strict regime of self-discipline and personal prayer; participation in Samā' as a legitimate means to spiritual



transformation; reliance on either cultivation or unsolicited offerings as means of basic subsistence; independence from rulers and the state, including rejection of monetary and land grants; generosity to others, particularly, through sharing of food and wealth, and tolerance and respect for religious differences.

He, in other words, interpreted religion in terms of human service and exhorted his disciples “to develop river-like generosity, sun-like affection and earth-like hospitality.” The highest form of devotion, according to him, was “to redress the misery of those in distress – to fulfill the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry.”

It was during the reign of Emperor Akbar (1556–1605) that Ajmer emerged as one of the most important centers of pilgrimage in India. The Mughal Emperor undertook an unceremonial journey on foot to accomplish his wish to reach Ajmer. The Akbarnāmah records that the Emperor’s interest first sparked when he heard some minstrels singing songs about the virtues of the Walī (Friend of God) who lay asleep in Ajmer.

Muʿīnuddīn Chishtī authored several books including *Anīs al-Arwāh* and *Dalīl al-ʿArifīn*, both of which deal with the Islamic code of living.

Quṭbuddīn Bakhtiyār Kāḳī (d. 1235) and Hamīduddīn Nagorī (d. 1276) were Muʿīnuddīn Chishtī’s celebrated Khalīfas or successors who continued to transmit the teachings of their master through their disciples, leading to the widespread proliferation of the Chishti Order in India.

Among Quṭbuddīn Bakhtiyār’s prominent disciples was Farīduddīn Ganj-i-Shakar (d. 1265), whose dargāh is at Pakpattan, (Pakistan). Farīduddīn’s most famous disciple was Nizamuddin Auliya’ (d. 1325) popularly referred to as Mahbūb-e-Ilāhī (God’s beloved), whose dargāh is located in South Delhi.

From Delhi, disciples branched out to establish dargāhs in several regions of South Asia, from Sindh in the west to Bengal in the east, and the Deccan in the south. But from all the network of Chishti dargāhs the Ajmer dargāh took on the special distinction of being the ‘mother’ dargah of them all.

Sufis of the Chishtī Order

He had more than one thousand khalīfas and hundreds of thousands of disciples. Sufis of different orders became his disciples and took ijāzah from him. Among the famous Sufis who trace their lineage to him are: Quṭbuddīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, Farīduddīn Mas'ūd, Nizāmuddīn Auliya', Amir Khusrau, Muhammad Hussain-i Gisūdarāz Bandanawāz, Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī, Aṭā' Hussain Fānī and Shāh Jamāl Bābā Bahaya Aurangabadī.

Today, hundreds of thousands of people – Muslims, Hindus, Christians and others, from the Indian sub-continent, and from other parts of the world – assemble at his tomb on the occasion of his 'urs (death anniversary).

The Sanusiya: is a military brotherhood started by Al-Sanusi (d.1837) in Libya with political and military as well as religious aims. They fought against the colonizing Italians and the former king of Libya was head of the order.

The Nimatulahiya: it was developed first in Persia and then to India as a specifically oriented Sufi order.

The Ahmadiya: is the leading order in Egypt with its centre at Tanta. It was founded by Ahmad-al-badawi (d.1726).

All the above discussed orders helped in spreading of Islam and their Sufi concepts in frontier lands such as India, Central and South-East Asia, Sudan, Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Prominent Sufi exponents:

This section will discuss the role of two prominent Sufi exponents who contributed immensely in the development of Sufistic thought

1.Imam Ghazili

2.Maulana Rumi

Imam Ghazili may be regarded as the chief exponent of Sufistic thought. He occupies a position unique in the history of Muslim religious and political thought by whatever standard we may judge him: breadth of learning, originality or influence. He has been acclaimed as the proof of Islam (hujjat al-Islam), the ornament of faith (zainal-din) and the renewer of religion (mujahhid).²⁰

He was a canon-lawyer, a Scholastic, a philosopher and a skeptic, a mystic, theologian, a traditionalist and moralist. His position as a theologian of Islam is undoubtedly most eminent. His outlook on philosophy is characterized by a remarkable originality which however, is more critical than constructive. He was the first who formulated the notions of this thought. His exposition of this system in a few words is as follows: like the school of commandment the school of Tasawwuf consists of two parts- Knowledge and conduct. The difference between the two is that, in the first knowledge precedes conduct whereas in the latter Knowledge is the outcome of the conduct.

The most important thing about Al-Ghazali's system of thought is its method which may be described as that of the courage to know and the courage to doubt. The best expression of it is given in his famous autobiographical work, al-Munqidh min al-Dalal (The deliverer from error) which he wrote some five years before his death. In this work he made a critical examination of the various schools of thought current in his time in a manner closely similar to that of Descartes (d.1060|1650) in his discourse de la method (1047|1637).

For Ghazali all kinds of knowledge should be investigated and nothing should be considered dangerous or hostile. He views "I poked into every dark recess and made an assault on every problem, I plunged into every abyss. I scrutinized the creed of every sect and I

²⁰ Sharif., M.M. (Ed) 2004, A History of Muslim Philosophy, Vol.1. Low Price Publications, Delhi, Pg.581.

fathomed the mysteries of each doctrine. All this I did that I might distinguish between the truth and the false. There was not a philosopher whose system I did not acquaint myself with, or a theologian whose doctrines I did not examine. If ever I met a Sufi, I coveted to probe into his secrets; if an ascetic, I investigated into the basis of his austerities; if one of the atheistic zindiqs, I groped into the causes of his bold atheism.”²¹ Such was the courage of al-Ghazali to know. He was free from the parochialism of the dogmatic theologians of his day who would rather consign the books of the atheists and philosophers to flames and then read them. But prepared though he was to listen to every creed and doctrine, he would accept none and doubt all. For one thing, he came to the conclusion that the greatest hindrance in the search for truth was the acceptance of beliefs on the authority of others and blind adherence to the heritage of the past. He remembered the traditional saying of the prophet: “Every child is born with a sound disposition (fitrah) it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian”²² and he was anxious to know what that sound disposition was before it suffered the impress of the unreasoned convictions imposed by others. Indeed, he wanted to reconstruct all his knowledge from its very foundation. Voluminous works of Imam Ghazali are considered to be the standard works on Islamic mysticism. They give a wonderful minute dissection of the human mind, its shades and colours, passions, emotions and volitions and contain a remedy for every conceivable moral or spiritual ailment.

Another great figure of the same school Maulana Rumi quotes the same illustration and says that the heart of man, when thus purified becomes the tabernacle of the divine. His famous book known as *Masnavi* known by the name of the “Quran in Persian language”.

The pages of Islamic history are bright with the names of these spiritual luminaries, all down the ages. The names of Attar, Hafiz, Sadi among the Persians, are too well to be given a introduction.

Every Muslim land is rich in these beacon lights. Muin-ud-din, Nizam-ud-din, Ganj Baksh, Baha-ud-din and many others shone on the spiritual horizon of India and their graves to this day adorn that ancient home of sages and seers attracting crowds of pilgrims, both Hindus and Muslims. There are various spiritual pleasures of their ecstatic moments likened to wine or the gentle breeze and quite a vocabulary of terminology has been developed to express the

²¹ Al-Munqidh, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Leiden, Pg20, 21.

²² Quran, xxx,30, Quoted in Sharif, Op.Cit, Pg453.

hundred and one phases in relation to the universal mind. Here is a specimen of their enchanting notes:

“A philosopher you have become, but you know not,
From where you are, where you are and what you are.
Throw your hundreds of books and leaves in the fire;
Turn your heart and soul towards the beloved,
In your heart you will see knowledge of prophets;
Without the aid of book,
Or tutor or teacher”²³

- Maulana Rumi

“How long will you waste your time in Greek philosophy?
Come and learn the philosophy of believers too
A lifetime had been wasted in discourses of grammar,
Come and read a word of love as well
There is no knowledge but the knowledge of love”

Maulana Rumi

Jalaluddin Rumi is considered to be the greatest mystical poet of Islam. He was born in 604\1207 during the reign of Muhammad Khwarizm Shah whose empire extended from the Ural Mountains to the Persian Gulf and from the Euphrates to the Indus. Rumi's father entrusted the education of his promising son to this teacher who inculcated in his pupil the habit of independent teaching. Rumi's education covered the whole curriculum: the Quranic commentary, Hadith, jurisprudence, Arabic language and literature. His *Mathnawi* bears ample evidence of this vast learning. It is on account of this intellectual and academic training that his mysticism is not merely emotional. At every step we find him intellectualizing his supranational spiritual experiences. He spent seven years in the colleges of Damascus and we find him still engaged in academic pursuits even at the age of forty.

²³ Quoted in Carl Weitten, 1987, *Maulana Rumi and Sufism*, United Publications, London, Pg 69.

It was the influence of Shams of Tabriz which changed Rumi to a great mystical poet with spiritual experiences. Also Rumi who avoided music until now changed himself into an ecstatic dancer accompanied by spontaneously gushing forth lyrics as an involuntary expression of deeply stirred soul. However Rumi had no intention of either founding a new sect or initializing a new movement; his devotees and disciples however did form a distinctive group after his death, but they developed only some external observances and rituals and degenerated into a community of whirling dervishes.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam have inculcated a belief in creation ex nihility by a voluntary act of the creator at a particular moment of time. In Rumi's views there is no creation in time because time itself is created and is a category of phenomenal consciousness which views events in serial time and mystic consciousness diving into the spiritual ground of being apprehends reality as non-spatial and non-temporal. For Rumi as for Al-Ghazali time and space are categories of phenomenal consciousness only. He says about serial time, "You think in terms of the past and the future; when you get rid of this mode of consciousness, the problem will be solved."²⁴

The universe, according to Rumi, is a realm of love. In comparison with love, law and reason are secondary phenomenon. It is love that creates to fulfill itself and reason steps in later to look at it retrospectively, discovering laws and informalities to seek the threads of unity in the diversities of manifested life. Language was not created by any preconceived grammar, nor do the flowers blossom by any conscious planning or according to the laws of botany or aesthetics. Rational thinking follows creation but does not precede it. Rationalization, being a secondary phenomenon, is not by itself a creative force. As Hegel, has said philosophy always comes too late only to contemplate retrospectively what the dynamism of history has already created and completed. Cosmic love transcends all creeds and all philosophies and so the religion of love could never be completely identified with any orthodoxy, dogmatism or love and universal reason, but when the human intellect narrows itself, it begins to take part for a whole making the mistake of identifying a fragmentary phenomenon with the whole of reality. Human intellect, divorced from universal reason, remains at the biological and utilitarian level and language which is the outward garb of the intellect possesses no vocabulary for the

²⁴ Quoted in Sharif. M.M. Op.Cit Pg.830.

description of the intuition of cosmic love. Human consciousness remains generally at the biological level and its perceptions, affections and conations are governed directly or indirectly by biological needs. This biological instrument Rumi calls Khirad or particular reason ('Aql-i-juzwi) to distinguish it from universal reason, which is an ally of the intuition of life. The particular reason which exultingly calls itself scientific reason, capable of explaining all reality and solving the riddle of the universe, proves to be utterly useless when faced with the intuition of life and love and instead of gracefully accepting its inadequacy begins foolishly to deny the reality that it cannot comprehend.

The religion of a mystic philosopher like Rumi is a universal religion which could not be enclosed within any orthodox or dogmatic boundaries. His religion is not the creed of any particular religious community but being the religion of the universe is a universal religion. It is the religion of glowing stars, of flowing streams and of growing trees. Whose belief, intuition and practice accord with this outlook, he has attained the truth. Religion if it is genuine is not a blind faith about the understandable unknown; it is an ever-present reality perceived and lived.

Rabi'ah-al Adawiyyah of Basra (95 or 99/713 or 717-185/801)²⁵

Rabi'ah-al Adawiyyah was a famous woman mystic, well known for her advocacy of disinterested love for God. She was born into a poor home, stolen as a child and sold into slavery. But her devotion to life of piety and prayer enabled her to win her freedom. She decided to adopt a life of celibacy in spite of many offers of marriage by removed mystics of her time. Once her companion suggested to her in the spring season to come out of the house to behold the works and beauties of God. She replied: come you inside that you may behold their maker. Contemplation of the maker has turned me away from the contemplation of what he has made.²⁶

Her contribution to mysticism was her doctrine of disinterested love of God which served both as a motive and a goal for her. With most of her contemporary mystics the guiding motive for asceticism and otherworldliness was the fear of hell or the reward of paradise. Rabi'ah, on the other hand tried to emphasize that a man who claims to attain union

²⁵ Ibid. Pg.832.

²⁶ Khwaja Farid 'Attar, *Tadhkirat al-Auliya*, Karimi Press, Bombay, 1321 A.H, P.46.

with God should be oblivious of both. Attar relates that once some mystics came to her. She asked: Why do you worship God? One said: There are seven stages in hell and everybody has to pass through them: therefore, in fear and dread of them I worship. Another replied: the eight stages of paradise are places of great delight and a worshipper is promised complete rest there. Rabi'ah replied: he is a bad servant who worships God for fear of punishment or desire of reward. They asked her: Why do you worship if you have no desire for paradise? She replied: I prefer the neighbor to the neighbor's house (i.e. paradise). She added that God is worship even if there is no motive in one hand and water in the other. People asked her the meaning of her action. She replied: I am going to light fire in paradise and to pour water on hell so that both veils may completely disappear from the pilgrims and their purpose may be sure, and the servants of God may see him without any object of hope or motive of fear²⁷ in the following verses, she distinguishes the two kinds of love, selfish and disinterested:

In two ways have I loved thee: selfishly,
And with a love that worthy is of Thee.
In selfish love my joy in Thee I find,
While to all else, and others, I am blind.
But in that love which seeks Thee worthily,
The veil is raised that I may look of Thee.
Yet is the praise in that or this not mine,
In this and that the praise is wholly thine.²⁸

The object of this disinterested love, according to Rabi'ah, was union with God. She says: My hope is for union with Thee, for that is the goal of my desire.

Rabi'ah held that the true love, whose consciousness is unwaveringly centered on the beloved, is unattached to conditions such as pleasure or pain, not from sensory dullness but from ceaseless rapture in divine love.

²⁷ Aflaki, *Manaqib al-Arifin*, as quoted in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, P.463a.

²⁸ M.Smith, *Rabiah, the Mystic*, P.102-04.

Sufis relationship with God

Having felt convinced that Sufism is the best of all paths; the Sufi has to take a few decisions regarding his relation to God, man and the world. For it is in light of these relations that he can be distinguished from others. In a way these relations constitute the criteria on the basis of which a genuine Sufi could be distinguished from those who just pretended to be so.

Out of these three types of relations the Sufi's relation to God is the most important, because the other two, strictly speaking are derived from and based on it. Qushairi makes the following significant statements in connection with the Sufi's relation to God.

1. The first and foremost thing is that one's belief in God should contain no element of Doubt. It should not be contaminated with new fangled notions and misguiding concepts, and should be firmly rooted in self-evident facts.²⁹

Doubt in this context means vagueness about the attributes of God and skepticism is possible only if he relies on whatever has come down to him warning against "new-fangled" notions and "misguiding concepts". What these notions and concepts were, one can easily find out from what both Qushairi and Hujwiri bring under the heading of *Malahidah* and *Qaramitah*, etc. but what is most remarkable in this connection is the emphasis the Sufi lays on factual evidence, for he believes that the purely conceptual is not the only relation man can have with God; this relation can be experiential to,

2. A person's relation to God should be so thorough, comprehensive and intimate that it would lead him to feel as if he lives and does everything not because he is doing it all, but because he is doing it all, but because God is doing it all. In identifying himself with God he would go through the double process of losing his moral self in him and experiencing him in every act of his own self. As a consequence of this the Sufi, from the very beginning, endeavors to have a life about which it may be truly said it is a life with and in him.³⁰

²⁹ Al-Qushairi, Op.Cit., Pg.317.

³⁰ Ibid., P.126

3. Another way of putting the point stressed above is that the Sufi not only stops referring all his acts to his mortal self, but he builds up the positive attitude that it is the divine will which must be accepted by the Sufi as the supreme. Not on this or that occasion, nor in such and such particular situation but always and in every situation of which his life is composed³¹
4. The Sufi's relation to God is a pure relation in the sense that it is a relation just between him and his God without any material link.³²
5. This relation rids man of all occupation with worldly affairs and mundane.³³
6. The Sufi must regard himself as having been created for nobody and nothing except God³⁴

Regarding their relations to their fellow-beings and the world at large, the early Sufi's were quite explicit in emphasizing that the Shariah is the framework within which these relations have to be built and maintained. With this in view they enjoined on every Sufi to pursue all the sciences on which the Shariah is based;³⁵ it was enjoined especially that he should seek enlightenment about the way the Holy Prophet lived his life so that the Sunnah might become the guiding light for him in everything he does and every relationship he builds. While the different schools of Sufis had each its own unique pattern of Sufi techniques, they were all agreed on one common framework of ultimate reference, and that was the framework of the Shariah³⁶

The distinction between the Sufi's position and that of the orthodox theologian lies in the fact that the theologian regards the law (Shariah) and reality (Haqiqah) as one and the same, while the Sufi maintains that the two are so different from each other that unless one explicitly recognizes the difference, one is apt to commit a fundamental error.³⁷ Reality from this point of view is a special aspect of God, such that man can and must aspire to understand and act upon as completely as possible.

³¹ Ibid., P.127.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Hujwiri, Op. Cit., P.217.

³⁷ Ibid., P.446-47.

The identity of reality and Shariah which the Sufis attributes to the theologian does not appear to be easy to understand. Going by what one finds in the writings of the leaders of the four schools of Fiqh, one would say that the theologian is very logical and cautious in his views regarding the attributes of God. He would be the last person to identify the Shariah and the Haqiqah, for whereas the understanding of Shariah requires for solving the problems of his daily life, the understanding of Haqiqah requires a special capacity with the Prophets alone are endowed.

Regarding the distinction between the Sufi's and the innovators and sophists, it is pointed out that while the Sufi's hold that the Shariah and Haqiqah, inspite of their theoretical distinction, always operate in intimate relation, the innovators maintain that the Shariah is operative only so long as a man has not established contact with reality; for whenever he does establish this contact, the Shariah stops being operative and becomes altogether useless and futile.³⁸

The broad significance of this distinction is that the early Sufi never regarded himself as some of Carmathians and others did, as law unto himself or as a lawgiver to others.

Apart from these distinctions between the position taken up by the Sufis on the one hand and theologians, carmathians, etc., on the other the early Sufi felt the need of another distinction and that was the distinction between his attitude towards the Shariah and that of the average Muslim. He held that while for the average man of religion a large number of conveniences and concessions are permissible within the framework of the Shariah, there are no such concessions and conveniences for the Sufi. The latter does not believe in an extremely high level of conformity with the law. As there is no transgression for the Sufi, there is no relaxation for him. Even the relaxation permissible to others is a threat to him³⁹

This unsparing attitude of the Sufi is not the result of his belief in asceticism per se. it is rather the logical result of his basic attitude towards God which is his starting point, and by virtue of which alone he is justified in calling himself a Sufi. The concessions given by the Shariah to an average Muslim are determined by his station in life in so far as he accepts the

³⁸ Ibid. P.446.

³⁹ Al-Qushairi, Op Cit, Pg.182, 186.

rights and obligations for the fulfillment of which concessions and conveniences within the Shariah may be necessary. This point becomes clear when one compares the attitude of the Sufi with that of the ascetic. Whereas the ascetic believes in the strategy of now sacrificing this asset or resource now that in his search for goodness, the Sufi believes in an all-out bid to reach God. There is nothing too precious, too dear, or too delicate to be spent and expended in the Sufi's endeavour at reaching the fountain which alone can quench his thirst.⁴⁰

It is the Sufi's acceptance of Tauhid as basic and fundamental that helps him build the right type of relation with God without which there is nothing in his life because of which he may be called a Sufi. It would be necessary, therefore, to state clearly what Tauhid meant to the early Sufi's.

A Sufi like Junaid of Baghdad believed that Tauhid means that a man has the knowledge as sure as any scientific knowledge today would be, that God is unique in his timelessness, and that there is none like him and further that nothing and nobody can carry out the actions which he, and he alone, is capable of carrying out. On another occasion Junaid puts his ideas about Tauhid thus: It is the maximum of certainty with which you believe that all motion as well as lack of motion of things created is the act of God.⁴¹ Jafar Sadiq explained Tauhid by saying: He who thinks that Allah is in something, or o something, commits the sin of making things other than God. His equals, because if God be in something it means that he is in time and space.⁴² Abu 'Ali Rudhbari expressed what Tauhid meant to him by saying: God is other than that which man's thinking and imagining makes him out to be, because he himself says in Quran, "There is nothing like him and he hears all and sees all"⁴³

The early Sufi believed that once he had set the pattern of his life in the mould of the attitudes and relations, described somewhat in detail above, he was ready to make a start in realizing his ultimate ambition namely, the ambition of experiencing God in such a way that he might be able to say, like every Sufi: "What for others is just a matter of conjecture and vague hypothesis is for him there like the most certain entity, and what for others is a matter of

⁴⁰ Ibid. P.182, 186.

⁴¹ Ibid., P.5

⁴² Ibid. P 6.

⁴³ Ibid, P.5.

conceptual understanding of God is for him something to be experienced as existent about the reality of which there can be no possible doubt, so that he can sing with the poet:

“My night is aglow with the beauteous grandeur of the face,
While the darkness of night envelops everyone else,
While others are enshrouded in the pitch darkness of night,
I am experiencing the brilliant light of the day”⁴⁴

But how he should make a start, and what exactly he should do after having made a start are matters of controversy among Sufi's. Those controversies are more keen and intense among the latter Sufi's than among the early ones. The intensity of these controversies among the later Sufi's can be judged from the simple fact that, as we come out of the period of early Sufism and get into the later period we find no Sufi who is not anxious to link himself to one of the orders like Qadriyyah, Chistiyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, Shattariyyah, Uwaissiyyah, Suhrawardiyah, Malamtiyyah, etc. Among the early Sufis on the other hand we find practically no trace of such anxiety. For example, one finds little mention of such orders in Qushairi, though Hujwiri, who came after Qushairi, shows a good deal of order consciousness. This order-consciousness of Hujwiri, which probably reflects the order-consciousness of his contemporary Sufi's, finds expression in a discussion of such orders as: al-Muhasibiyyah, al-Taifuriyyah, al-Qassariyyah, al-Saiyariyyah, al-Suhaliyyah, al-Kharraziyyah, al-Nuriyyah, etc.

The early Sufis regarded reliance on just one's own initiative as misleading perhaps because they considered the experiences of a beginner to be mostly theoretical for when he thinks he is in contact with reality, he may actually be just imagining things; or he may be a victim of illusions and hallucinations. If it is just the disciple's own insight, limited as it is in the beginning and nothing else, on which he has to depend, he will find it almost impossible to distinguish between the genuine Sufi experiences and what he is at the time experiencing. If, on the one hand, he is under the guidance of an established master and preceptor and observes the disciples, he is in no danger of falling a victim to illusions and hallucinations and in case he does fall victim to such confusions, he has, in his preceptor, one can bring him back to the right path. The preceptor can do it because he is in actual living contact with reality and his first-

⁴⁴ Ibid. P.334.

hand experience of reality can help the disciple verify his own experiences are genuine or otherwise.

The Sufi-Preceptor relation

The Sufi disciple-preceptor relation would be unislamic if it could be demonstrated that the features which distinguish it from its Jewish and Christian models are not derived from Islam but are, rather derived from sources other than Islamic. However, these extra-Christian and extra-Jewish elements in the systems of the early Sufis were not derived from sources other than the Quran and the Sunnah. And one could cite in support, cases like that of Shibli, the preceptor and Husri, the disciple. Shibli told Husri in the very beginning of their relationship that if between one Friday and the next, when he had come to Shibli, i.e. for one his mind, his coming to Shibli was altogether forbidden.⁴⁵ The case of Shilbi and Husri is instructive from another point too. It illustrates in a simple and concrete form what exactly the Sufi preceptor does for his disciple.

To think of nothing and to live a life involved in nothing but God, not only for one whole week, but week after week, is the least that is expected of a beginner. Such a way of life is easier described than actually lived. Life as average mortal lives presents no parallel to this kind of involvement. For the Sufi, especially the beginner, in spite of his having selected the path of Sufism, is still the member of a living society which does not stop making demands on him; and he needs attending to so many other things just to survive and remain strong enough to carry out the task that the Shariah prescribes for him even strong enough to carry out the task that the Shariah prescribes for him even in the context in which he has to put himself. To carry out adequately all this and yet let no thought other than that of God enter his mind even for the fraction of a moment seems, at the face of it, quite an impossibility. The only parallel one finds in ordinary life is that of a lover. The lover is seldom forgetful of his love in spite of all activities of daily life; rather he does everything for the sake of his beloved. Even so the Sufi does everything for the sake of his beloved, God. Once this becomes possible, acts not only like

⁴⁵ Ibid. P.182.

those of the prescribed five prayers a day, but even those remotely connected with praying, becomes acts carried out by him with God constituting the constant frame of reference.⁴⁶

The case of an ordinary lover is easier to understand for the simple reason that, as we know, there is a lot within us which can never find expression or satisfaction without one's being in love. The person with whom one is in love offers a living answer to so many of the problems of a lover's personality that, without being in love with just such and such person, the lover might have remained incomplete himself. In so far as there is this personal, specific and concrete element in every lover-beloved relation, it falls below the Sufi-God relation. But in so far as every genuine lover-beloved relation means the living by the lover a life which even when it does not appear to be lived for the sake of the beloved, is actually colored by the tender thoughts of the beloved deep in the heart of the lover, the lover-beloved relation offers the only parallel in ordinary life for the Sufi-god relation of the type Shilbi demanded of Husri.

How the Sufi comes to fall in love with God, the unseen is one of the greatest mysteries of Sufism. One may however, safely infer that unless there is a preceptor this would be impossible for a beginner. The conceptual unseen somehow must be made experiential, for otherwise the Sufi can never have a more personalized and intimate understanding of him than just an intellectual grasp of that which his logically defined nature can provide. One may say that the preceptor helps his disciple fall in love with God first by turning intellectual acceptance of God by him into an emotional acceptance. Once the disciple has worked through this stage, and succeeded in converting his own intellectual acceptance of his creator into an emotional acceptance, he is ready for the next stage, the stage of finding this emotional acceptance of the creator so overwhelming that every other reality, social, biological, etc., is completely subordinated to it. And if one were to go into it one may find that these are just the first stages in the Sufi's long, life-long, career in God. Unfortunately, there is very little in the literature concerning the early Sufis which could throw light on the actual experiencing of the disciple in his progress and development.

Once the disciple has put himself completely in the hands of his preceptor, the chances are that he will soon start having experiences of reality which till then were altogether unknown

⁴⁶ Husaini, 1972, *Islamic Mysticism: A Study of Sufism*, Anmol Publications, Patna, and Pg.65.

to him. This first contact with reality might not always be conducive to happy results. Sometimes the novitiate feels the urge of communicating these novel and marvelous experiences of his to anybody and everybody just to test whether he still is in possession of his senses; and sometimes he communicates with others because of some other experiences and sometimes he communicates with others because of some other emotional urges. All this is forbidden. He should keep his experiences of reality as his most precious personal secrets to himself and divulge them to nobody except his preceptor.⁴⁷

Even the most intimate emotional involvement of the Sufi with the creator does not result in his losing the perspective of his material surroundings. Account after account of a genuine Sufi's life will convince even the most skeptical that, if at all the over-all perspective of a Sufi is more realistic than the perspective of even the most realistic of the ordinary mortals among whom he has to live. Keeping this mind it would not be difficult for any student of Sufism to reject the charge usually leveled against the Sufis that they were mostly unrealistic persons wrapped up most of the time in the pseudo-universe of which God, a distorted father image is the centre. For the early Sufi, who was lucky to have met many of those who had the privilege of seeing the Holy Prophet and learning the Islamic way of life through their personal contact with him, God was the being not of mere conceptual nature, but rather a being who was responsible for the heavenly journey of the Prophet; the being to whom in their hour of distress they could turn and call aloud: "when is Allah going to help us!" and being from whom they expected to get the response in concrete terms which their anguished hearts desired. For such early Sufi's God was not a pseudo-father image; he was rather the most real and living being, and the ultimate refuge of those lost in delusions and hallucinations.

One of the first things which the disciple learns to do in order to establish his relation on a firm and operative footing is to put himself completely into the preceptor's hands. This attitude of complete faith in and reliance on the preceptor may lead the disciple sometimes into actions which to all intents and purposes go against the most explicit injunctions of the Shariah. But the disciple, in spite of his awareness of what the Shariah demands of him, must obey the preceptor. This aspect of the preceptor-disciple relations has been emphasized by the early Sufis as much as by the later ones. And it came in for very strong criticism from the orthodox

⁴⁷ Ibid.

theologians. But, inspite of the emphasis the early Sufis laid on the role of the Shariah in their lives, they justified this attitude, of blind obedience of the preceptor, on the ground that justified this attitude, of blind obedience of the preceptor, on the ground that it was just a passing phase in the development of the beginner, and a necessary phase, because without it was impossible for the beginner to get out of the personal and self-centered frame of reference which throughout his life up to the point he took a preceptor had been his only operative frame of reference. The way Qushairi puts the whole idea as: When the disciple has rid himself completely of the influence of his worldly position, status and wealth, it becomes incumbent on him to set right his relation with God by deciding never to say no to his Shaikh⁴⁸.

Having worked with the disciple through these early experiences, the Shaikh finds out the strength as well as the weaknesses of the disciple. In the light of this understanding the preceptor then selects one of the various names of the Almighty and takes him through an involvement with it in such a way that, by the time he finishes this period of training, he is completely influenced by it in everything he does. There are several stages in this which the disciple must pass through under the watchful supervision of the Shaikh. He first repeats this name of the Almighty, but even his heart and soul utter nothing but this name. Then the disciple is told to keep engaged in the uttering of the name all the time and continue thus till he feels actually as if he is with his heart and soul occupied with and engaged in nothing but his creator. It is at this last stage that the disciple achieves for the first time that involvement with the Almighty which alone makes it possible for him to go in his Endeavour to achieve an infinitely progressive type of involvement with him

The beginner's ability to achieve a view of the universe around him as nothing but that aspect of being which is signified by the particular name of the Almighty, on which the master trained him, depends a great deal on the influence exerted on him by the master's personality. But apart from this there is a considerable amount of hard work which has to be done by the beginner himself by way of long prayers, series of night-long vigils, self-denial in food, sleep, rest etc. this hard work which is planned and prescribed by the master has to be carried out by the disciple, however arduous and inconvenient it may be. To this hard work the early Sufi's

⁴⁸ Askari, S.H., Sufism in Bihar, In Journal of Bihar Research Society, Vol34.

the name of Mujahādah (i.e. the first seeing of the Almighty with the mind's eye) can never occur without Mujahādah.

One explanation of the significance of the beginner's hard work (Mujahādah), in so far as it is necessary condition for his first contact with reality, is that it is a process of disciplined prayers and ascetic practices which ultimately results in such a refinement of the Sufi's personality as to rid it of all that is base and low in it. This disciplined and refined personality is more ready to receive the first version of reality than the original personality of the beginner which basically is self-centered and crude.

But even the most stringent discipline of this type ((Mujahādah) is not considered by the early Sufi's to be the sole and necessary means for the first contact with reality (Mushahadah). As Hujwiri puts it, all such discipline is the Sufi's own work, but this work brings the proper reward in its wake only when the creator wills it.⁴⁹ Why the early Sufi's, in spite of rating the Sufi's labour so high, did not recognize it as the necessary means for the first contact with reality, was perhaps due to the fact that they had at the back of their minds the possibility that this very hard labor could produce in the Sufi's a sense of self-righteousness verging on conceit. And this conceit was the one thing which they thought, had been the cause of Satan's downfall, about whom the Quran is very explicit: he refused and felt conceited⁵⁰. It was with this in mind that the early Sufi's regarded the first contact with reality always a matter of grace rather than something earned by the Sufi just because of his working so hard.

The first contact with reality is regarded by the Sufis as just the beginning to which there is no end, because reality is infinite. But the beginning has a unique importance. Without it there would be, as one might say, no series of contacts to follow. Although there is not much explicit mention of it in the accounts of early Sufi's, scores of accounts of later Sufi's bear out the fact that sometimes a beginner may toil a year in fruitless vigils and fasts and may find its labors completely unrewarded. There is a kind of a barrier between the mortal self of the Sufi, on the one hand, and the glorious being of the creator, on the other, which must be broken for the infinite series of ever more intimate contacts between the two to follow. It is the first crack

⁴⁹ Ibid. P.252.

⁵⁰ Quran, ii, 34.

in this barrier, which in spite of its being just a crack gives it its unique significance. For without it there is no possibility of the more adequate removal of the barrier which has yet to come.

What happens after the first contact between the beginner and his creator is a secret which nobody has ever completely revealed, for the simple reason, among others, that the experiences of the Sufi from this point on are on a plane together different from the plane of the average mortal. Communication between the Sufi and the average mortal is consequently extremely hazardous, if not altogether impossible. If the Sufi uses the language of the average mortal, he may mean one thing and actually say another; and if he uses the language he creates in order to give expression to his unique experiences, he may not be understood at all.

All that we are in possession of therefore, in the writings of the early Sufi's regarding the states and relations through which they pass after the first crack in the barrier between them and their creator, is a collection of carefully coined and scrupulously selected terms which some of the employ to convey something at least of what they see in the course of their journey into the infinite.

Two such terms are Station (Maqam) and State (Hal). Each one stands for a specific type of development the Sufi goes through. The basis of distinction between them is the same as the one between Mujahadah and Mushahadah. Station is the general term which covers all those stages which after the initial contact with reality are considered achievable through the Sufi's own toil and labour. State, on the other hand, covers all those states which are the result of the ceaseless flow of grace of which the Sufi remains the recipient so long as he does not falter and remains steadfast in his pursuit of reality. This is expressed by Hujwiri in the following words: Maqam is consequent upon one's own actions, while Hal is one of the blessings conferred upon him independently of his actual actions.⁵¹

That of the almost infinite series of stations a perfect Sufi may achieve only a few is explicitly mentioned by the early Sufis. Hujwiri sums up the whole thing in two sentences: 1. Taubah (Renunciation of all that had been evil in the Sufi's up-to-date) is the beginning of the

⁵¹ Hujwiri., Op.Cit. P.223.

series of Maqamat 2. Rida (Absolute satisfaction with the State in which God keeps the Sufis) is the last of the series⁵².

Another pair of terms that was common among the early Sufis was that of Knowledge (ilm) and gnosis (ma'rifah). The difference between the two is brought out first by pointing out that, whereas the theologians (ulema) make no distinction between them, the Sufis believe that the one must never be confused with the other. For the theologian all sure and certain knowledge is ilm; therefore ma'rifah, in the sense in which the Sufi's use it, is also ilm and nothing else. They consequently think that "the possessor of knowledge" (alim) and "the possessor of gnosis" (arif) mean one and the same thing. But as Hujwiri points out, the theologians contradict themselves when they assert that whereas alim is a descriptive term and can be used for God, the term arif cannot be used thus.⁵³

The Sufis think that between knowledge and Gnosis there is a basic distinction which should never be lost sight of. Knowledge, in their eyes, is that which is the last resort, when analyzed, never takes us beyond empty verbal form; gnosis, on the other hand, is that awareness which when analyzed ends up in direct experience of concrete facts, processes and things. Knowledge, therefore, seldom influences one's real conduct, while gnosis can seldom remain without influencing it. From their point of view, knowledge is rudimentary form of gnosis. Consequently, the possessor of gnosis must have at one stage possessed knowledge.⁵⁴

Another pair of terms popular among the early Sufi's is that of Fana and Baqa. as to the definitions in detail, differences crop up. This is illustrated even in the attitudes of Qushairi and Hujwiri. For the former maintains, he whom the glory of reality overwhelms to such an extent that he observes neither in itself, nor in its effects, nor in the form of its traces and tracks, anything other than reality, is described as one who has achieved Fana, in respect of the creator.⁵⁵ Hujwiri, on the other hand, maintains: Fana, is the complete lost in the vision of the real. He achieves Fana, through the vision of his own actions and Baqa through the vision of acts of God. His dealings with others are colored by reference are to him and not to his own

⁵² Ibid. P.224.

⁵³ Ibid., P.445.

⁵⁴ Ibid., P.320.

⁵⁵ Al-Qushairi, Op.Cit., p.141.

mortal self. Hence, he who loses all that is mortal self. Hence, he who loses all that is mortal and finite in his mortal self achieves permanence proportionately in the vision of divineness of the real.⁵⁶

To sum it up Fana means the complete disappearance of three things 1. The bad actions, tendencies and conduct 2.the low and base self 3. The world at large. So far as the first form of Fana is concerned, the disappearance means their disappearing altogether from existence; so far as the second and third forms of Fana are concerned it means that, in spite of the self and others still being in existence, the Sufi has become oblivious of their existence.

A Sufi thinks of nothing, feels nothing but his beloved and of his beloved all the time, that is his creator. The result is that when one studies the lives of these Sufis, one finds that they take not even a single step in their lives of these Sufis without feeling sure within themselves that this and nothing else will please him. How they should walk when they tread the earth, how they should talk when they mix with their fellow-men, how they should dress, what they should eat, what they should drink, what they should do when they get up in morning if they go to sleep at all- each and every detail of everything relating to these matters is prescribed for them. And the basic principle underlying all such prescriptions is that even the maximum of obedience, service, sacrifice, devotion and love is not enough; so they should always regard the maximum as the minimum and constantly strive for devotion more thorough and a love more intense. It is this burning desire to lose oneself in the creator on an ever-increasing scale in everything, major or minor, over the whole period of one's life, which distinguishes the early Sufi from everybody else.

After discussing some main tenets of Sufism, I will now focus on the Sufi literature in Persian.

Sufistic literature in Persian

The earlier mystics of Islam had made extensive use of Arabic poetry, whether by seeking inspiration in the recitation of love poetry, which could be taken as directed to either a human or a divine beloved, or by Composing verses of their own. It was in Persian poetry; however that Sufism was now to find its greatest and most widespread expression producing

⁵⁶ Ibid., P.299.

what the eastern Islamic world from Turkey to India regards as the highest peaks of its cultural heritage.

In the eleventh century, eastern Iranian writer Hujwiri wrote about pseudo-Sufis who spent their time listening to 'idle quatrains', and in the work of Ahmad Ghazali, the use of the popular, anonymous Persian quatrain in a distinctively Iranian context. From the early twelfth century we find expressions of Sufism in other forms of Persian verse: the ode and the long didactic composition in rhyming couplets. Sana'i was considered a master of both prose and poetry who was a court poet of Ghazna in Afghanistan and he died in 1131 A.D.⁵⁷ he particularly attacks the sexual misconduct of the women mystics. His work reveals him to be a pronounced misogynist, whose love lyrics are often directed to boys, as is normal in classical Islamic poetry.

Similarly Sana'i's odes contain not only the praise of wealthy patrons and straightforward exhortations to piety, but also the language of libertinism: he extols wine-drinking, handsome cupbearers and also in contrast to his attack on their terrestrial self-manifestation in Ghazna, the dervishes who go against the religious law, the Qalandars. The Qalandars are used to represent the higher flights of ecstasy and truth, as opposed to ordinary religiosity:

Cupbearer give wine since wine shatters abstaining
So that I may lose awhile this specious world renouncing...
For a time the religion of Zarathushtra and the custom of the Qalandar
Must be made the provisions for the spirit which takes the road⁵⁸

Sana'i, also composed an extended narrative and didactic poem, called *The Journey of God's servants* (Sayr al-'ibad), which has often been compared to Dante's *Divine comedy*. In this the narrator acquires a guide, an old man who is evidently the Active intelligence of the Greek philosophical tradition, that is to say the tenth and lowest of the immaterial manifestations of reason which, the philosophers believe, emanate from God. Together the poet

⁵⁷ J. Baldick 1989 *Mystical Islam- An Introduction to Sufism*, Tauris Parke Paperbacks, London, Pg. 68.

⁵⁸ L. Massingnon, 1954 *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, second edition, inside publishers, Paris. Pg. 104.

and the guide journey through the material world and then the heavens, before reaching the universal soul of the neo-Platonists. The highest emotion, the first or universal intelligence or reason, is hidden by veils, which cover different classes of dervishes. Eventually the poet finds a superior rank of these and in it a dominating light which represents his patron, a local judge, whom Sana'I asks for money in end.

Sana'I is best known, however, for a longer didactic poem, the Enclosed Garden of Reality (Hadiqat al-haqiqah). In this he begins with an exposition of God's uniqueness, before tackling the subject of asceticism, and then the teachings of the Greek philosophical tradition: the human body is a city with the heart as its king. Reason is the king's minister, supported by Anger (the chief of the garrison) and desire (the tax gatherer), who rule over the limbs (the artisans). Again, the active intelligence appears as an old man, who gives the poet spiritual guidance, he must join the Sufis. The rest of the poem is largely taken up with the praise of the Sultan of Ghazna.

Another notable Persian poet was Attar. Who is being believed to have been perished in 1221 in the massacres committed by the Mongol followers of the notorious Chinggis Khan. His long didactic and narrative poems are usually dominated by the figure of the spirit, which is seen as God's caliph, his deputy on earth. His most famous work was, The Language of the Birds (Mantiq al-tayr) concerns the search of a king made by a number of birds. Attar's Book of Affliction (Musibat-nama) also has a complicated structure. In it a pilgrim runs away from his elder and asks Gabriel (who represents the spirit) for help. Since he has presumptuously sought assistance from the very summit of creation he has to descend through the universe before reascending to find the spirit again. He learns that the parts of the universe are attributes of the spirit, which is derived from the light of Muhammad.

Another work by Attar, the Book of the Divine (Ihâhi-nama), begins by invoking the spirit as God's caliph. It has six sons: the lower soul, the devil, the intellect, knowledge, poverty and the realization of God's uniqueness. In the body of the work a caliph instructs his own six sons. These sons fall into three pairs, to the trait of the lower soul, the intellect and the heart (which is transformed into the spirit); the three pairs also correspond to the neo-Platonist

triad of soul, reason and the one: and also to the hierarchy of ascetics, philosophers and Sufis. Thus the lower soul is linked to the devil (in instruction of the second pair).

Sufism like many other institutions became early in its history, a fertile ground for imitators, impostors and charlatans. The corrupting influence of these charlatans was regarded as a source of great confusion to all those who either wanted to follow the path of Sufism, or wanted honestly to understand it. One reason why this was so was that Sufism by its very nature was a discipline meant not for the average but for those who always felt ambitious for something above the average.

Besides these charlatans and impostors who put a garb of Sufism and exploited the credulous and the unwary, there was another group of men who unwillingly became the source of corruption and confusion. Since a Sufi more often than not was a man significantly different from the average, it was but natural that some among the Sufis went so far away from the norms of their societies and communities concerned, an inevitable result of which would have either a widespread skepticism regarding the erstwhile universally accepted norms, or a universal condemnation of that which such exceptions among the Sufis stood for. Neither of these two courses was considered to be healthy, for, whereas the first would have resulted in the complete demoralization of all Muslim communities, the latter could have resulted in the condemnation not only of the exceptional Sufis without exception, as deviants from the accepted norms.

Most of the early treatises on Sufism were written with two main aims in view: 1. to point out to all those who cared to read these works what Sufism really meant; and 2. to raise as strong a note of protest as possible against the current malpractices of the charlatans and impostors so that even those who may not have the time and will to follow the path of true Sufism may at least escape the clutches of these charlatans.

Sufism went through considerable development and modification as the Muslims came into contact with peoples of other races and cultures in the course of their history. Consequently, what came to be known as Sufism later on must be distinguished from what Sufism was in its early days. For, in spite of a great deal of what in later Sufism may be

recognized as nothing but an elaboration of what was there earlier, it would be instructive to find out at least what the earlier form was.

Love and universal brotherhood are the main themes which the Sufis and Sufistic literature is all about. Many of the Sufi had to undergo state persecution for their doctrines but this did not deter them from spreading the message of universal brotherhood.

The latter chapters will focus on Sufi Persian literature of Bihar and the lives and works of Sufi saints of Bihar.

CHAPTER-2

PROMINENT SUFIS OF BIHAR AND THEIR PERSIAN WORKS

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Bihar is one of the Indian states, which has played a prominent role in the promotion of Persian language and literature in India. The developmental role played in the arena of culture was carried on by Persian poets, writers and Sufis. It is quite remarkable that this particular region gave to world not only noble thinkers, reformers and humanists as Gautam Buddha, Mahavir and Ashoka but also great Sufis like Makhdoom Sharfuddin Maneri, Sultan Ahmad Chirmposh, Muzaffar Shams Balkhi and many others.

Apart from these brightest stars of Sufi galaxy, there were innumerable other Sufis who contributed to the development of Persian literature in Bihar. All of them have left behind a considerable literature in the form of Maktubat, Mulfuzat, Isharat, Aurads and other mystical tracts from which we can form an idea of their beliefs, preachings and outlook along with something that is of cultural and historical value.

Shaikh Sharfuddin Maneri is considered one of the most important revered Sufi saints of Bihar. His Maktubat-e-sadi and Maktubat-do-sadi are considered to be a best collection of letters on mystical doctrines and principles of Islam. Regarding the Malfuzats, Lataif-i-Maani, is an abridger version of Madanul-Mani, which was compiled by Zain Badr-i-Arabi, which contains the discourses delivered by Maneri. A detailed account of Maneri's writings will be done in the latter section of the chapter.

Similarly we find Maulana Muzafar Shams Balkhi's Maktubat which contains 181 letters. His Sharah-i-Mashriq-ul-Anwar, a standard work on tradition, Sharh-i-Auida-Hafizia and a small Diwan of poems have been preserved in Khudabaksh library, Patna.

Shaikh Husain's Malfuz, entitled Ganj-i-la-Yakhfa contains his discourses of 57 Majlis and his Maktubat consists of letters on mystic subjects including one addressed to Ibrahim Shaqi of Jaunpur, a treatise in Arabic named Hazarat-i-khams (5 different planes of existence) on the problem of divine unity and his collection of mystic poems, including a Mathnavi entitled Chahar Darwesh, are more generally known, but the Futuha Khanqah of

the Balkhi saints has some other works also such as *Risala-i-Khair-o-Sharr*, *Qaza-o-Qadar*, *Risala-i-Muhammadiya*, *Aurad-i-Dah Fasli*, *Risala-i-Tauhid* and *Risala-i-Akhasy-ul-Khas*¹.

Husain's son Shaikh Hasan Balkhi wrote small tracts such as *Risala-i-maani-dhat-wajh-o-Nafs*, *Risala-i-Hasht*, and was the compiler of *Lataef-ul-Ma'ni*, but his most well known work is *Kashif-ul-Asrar*, a commentary in Persian of his father's Arabic *Risala*. Husain's son Ahmad Lngar Dariya is well known because of his valuable *Malfuz*, *Munis-ul-Qulub*, which contains a mine of information about the *Firdausia* order of Sufis of Bihar. This *Malfuz* supplements the earliest works such as *Manaqib-ul-Asfia*, *Malfuz* of Maulana Amun, and *Risalai-Bahram Bihari* and it amplifies the references in them and gives additional information of historical and cultural value. A detailed description of some other important Sufi saints of Bihar according to their orders will be undertaken in the later part of the chapter.

This chapter will discuss the prominent Sufis of Bihar and analyse their Persian works. This chapter will focus on the main orders of Sufism in Bihar and also explore the tenets and visions of these various orders.

Bihar and Bengal had such a long series and such a galaxy of Sufi mystics of the various orders that they may claim to be regarded as the home of Indian Sufism. The two provinces were bound by the closest of ties not only political, but also religious, cultural and ideological. Out of the fourteen orders of *Khanwadahs* those of the highest repute were represented in Bihar, and each had a share in the general spread and development of Islam in different parts of the province. There was no difference in the cardinal principles and tenets of the various orders and there was no bar to people of one order getting 'permission' (*Ijazat*) and 'initiation' (*Bai'at*) from the saints of the other orders. They differed from one another in name, sometimes in respect of garb or dress and mostly about rules and methods of meditation (*Fikr*) recitation (*Zikr*) and their attitude towards *Dhikr* audition (*Sama*) and vocal music. The *Shuttaria* called *Madhhab* or *Mashrab* (mode of conduct) rather than order (*Khanwadah*) were closely connected with the *firdausia* and *Suharwardia*, but unlike them and the *Chistia*, and like the *Naqshbandia*, and even the *Qadria*, they rejected *Sama*, music or

¹ Askari, S.H. Sufism and Sufi orders of Bihar and Bengal in *Journal of Bihar and Bengal*, Vol.xxxiv, Ps 36-98.

singing. The Shutaria and also the Madaria and Qalandaria which at one time occupied an important position in Bihar have now sunk into the background. The Naqshbandiya did not attain any vogue in early times in Bihar. the oldest and the most widely – dispersed where the orders of the Shaharwardia and Chistiya, and though they still hold the field like the Qadriya in many parts, they were all eclipsed by the Firdausia order. In fact, owing to the towering personalities of Hazrat Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri and of his immediate successors, the Balkhi saints, the Firdausia order has always held a position of special prominence in Bihar. The saints of this ‘Silsila’ which was an offshoot of the great Suharwardia order constantly added to its strength and what is more important, fortunately for us they have left behind a considerable literature in the form of Makhtubat, Malfuzat, Isharat. Aurads and other mystical tracts from which we can form some idea of their beliefs, preachings and outlook and also get something that is of cultural and historical value.

The Sufis of Bihar were different from the Mullah and unlike the dry theologians or the clergy; they clung not to the letter but went to the spirit of the faith. They preferred a mystic and spiritual interpretation of the Quranic law to its mere literal sense. They considered service to God’s creatures and fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities towards their fellow beings as essential for their discipline. They put aside their own desires to render themselves agreeable to all, irrespective of caste or creed and they were free from all complexes and shackles of colour and race². They believed in gentle persuasion and infectious example of their character and devotion rather than in dialectics and argumentation to win others over to their side. It is the Sufis, not the mullahs who proved to be the best and most successful missionaries of Islam. They believed that a ‘Kafir’, unlike a ‘Mushrik’, could be a ‘Muwahhid’ (unitarian) and they quoted Ain-ul-Quzzat who said that all religions or at least a majority of them, were in essence the same.

The lives of the early Sufis of Bihar and their writings clearly show that whether they belonged to one or the other of chief orders, Chistia, Suhrawardis, Qadiria, Firdausia, Shuttaria, etc they were strictly orthodox, Bashar (with law) and not ‘be shar’ (without law) they followed the Quran and the Sunnat (traditions) accepted all the cardinal principles of Islam, denounced all innovations in the sphere of dogmas as Bid’at (heresy), insisted upon

² Rizvi, S.A. Muslim revivalists Movements in India in the 16 and 17th centuries, Vishal Pub, Agra 1965, Pg8.

strict adherence to, or observance of, the obligatory duties of their faith, even attempted to reconcile religion with philosophy and tried to explain or discard all that was obviously antagonistic to the fundamental teachings of Islam.³ They did not stand alone in all this, for, those who had flourished before them also did the same. Sufism came to Bihar long after it had passed through its earliest phases of development such as the ascetic and ecstatic stage followed by speculative, pantheistic and theosophical stages. Foundations had already been laid of the great Sufi orders with their hospices and monastic establishments variously called Zawiyah, Takya, Daira, Jama' atkhana and Khanqah and the great theorists and founder saints had already produced their standard works, laying down the pattern of thought which was followed by others.

Various orders of Sufis in Bihar

Imam Taj Faqih, eleventh in direct descent from Abu Darda bin Abdul Mutallib, an uncle of the Prophet of Islam was a great theologian of Jerusalem and the ancestor and forerunner of a long line of the Suharwardia, Shattaria and Firdausia mystic saints and missionaries of Bihar. He is said to have been induced to come in response to a call for help from an oppressed muslim missionary, Momin Arif, and he established himself in Maner in 576(1180 A.D.)as ia evident from a Qita-e-Tarikh or chronogram found in some printed books, including Wasilat-us-Sharaf Zaria-i-Daulat etc. it says"when he became victorious over the Raja of Maner, the Imam created a new world by his justice. It has come down from the ancestors of the past; that year the faith of Muhammad was strengthened:,. 'Din-i-Muhammad Shud Qavi" is the chronogram which yields the year 576. the 'kursinama' or the genealogical table of Maner saints contains a list of genealogical table of Maner saints contains a list of the companions of the Imam including Tajuddin Khandagah, Ali Turk Larbak and Qutub Salar, the standard bearer and the general of the imam's party, ho dies fighting for the faith.

The writings of Sufi saints of Bihar show that they were thoroughly acquainted with the works of master thinkers and theorists, not only of Sufism but those of other sections of the Muslims. Sufistic

³ Askari,S.H. Islam and Muslims in Bihar,Khudabaksh Oriental Library, Patna,1998.Pg.14.

theosophy had already reached its highest point before its introduction in Bihar in the 13th century⁴. Maneri made use, in his own way, of what his great predecessors had written and said on the subject of Islamic mysticism and quoted from them in support of his own contention, arguments of his own. He has frequently made mention of, and given extracts from the works of such celebrated mystic writers such as Khwaja Ziauddin Abun Najib (Adabul-Mudidin), Shaikh-us-Shuyukh Shihab-uddin (Awarif), Abu Talib Makki (Quwwat-ul-Qulub), Hujjatul Islam Imam Ghazzali (Ihya-ul-ulum), wasaya) Abul Qasim-al-Qushairi (Risala), Qazi-ul-Quzzat Hamadani (Tamhidat, Zubda etc). Shaikh Abu Nasar-as-Sarraj (Allama) Mohiuddin Ibn-i-Arabi (Fususul-Hikam and Futuhat-i-Mkkia), Abdullah-al-Harith bin Asad-al-Muhasabi Basari (Muhasiba), Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (Ghuniat-ul-Tlibin) and Futuhul Ghaib, Ali Bin Uthmani Jullabi Hujwiri (Kashf-ul-Mahjub). He has drawn copiously upon the classical mystic poems of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Mathnavi), Khwaja Fariduddin Attar (M antiq-ul-Tir, Asrar Nama, etc) Iraqi (Lama't) Khwaja Abu Sayeed, Abul Khair (Rubayyat), Thanai, (Hadiqat-ul-haqiqah). Amir Khusro, Saadi, Khaqani and Tazkirat-ul-Aulia have been also utilized.

Persian poets of Bihar were influenced by Sufi school of thought. Sharfuddin Maneri, Ahmed Chirmposh, Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, Abul Hassan Fard, Md. Ali Habib Nasr, Sufi Maneri and a number of other Sufi poets of Bihar expressed their mystic experiences through Persian poetry. They have left behind valuable records of their precious thoughts and attitudes towards life. Mysticism has been the dominant note in the Persian poetry of Bihar in general and Sufistic poetry in particular.

Maner, Phulwarisharif and Azimabad were important locations for Sufis. Phulwarisharif has been an important seat of Persian learning. Shah Abdul Hasan Fard and Md. Habib Nasr hailed from this place. They belonged to the lineage of Hazrat Tajul Arfin Peer Mojibullah. They have left behind their Persian diwan and a number of treatises dealing with different theological problems. In poetry they have expressed their Sufistic experiences and mystic thoughts through their works.⁵

⁴ Friedmann, Y (Ed) Islam in Asia, Vol.1, Magmes Press, Pg78.

⁵ Hussaini, S. On Sufism in India, Idarah-i-Adabiyat, New Delhi, Pg.19.

Imam Taj Faqih, eleventh in direct descent from Abu Darda bin Abdul Mutallib, an uncle of the prophet of Islam, was a great theologian of Jerusalem and the ancestor and fore-runner of a long line of the Suharwardia, Shattaria and Firdausia mystic saints and missionaries of Bihar. He is said to have been induced to come in response to a call for help from an oppressed Muslim missionary. Momin Arif, and he established at Maner in 1180 A.D. as is evident from a Qita-e-Tarikh or chronogram found in some printed books, including Wasilat-us-Shraf Zaria-i-daulat etc. it says "When he became victorious over the Raja of Maner, the Imam created a new world by his justice. It has come down from the ancestors of the past; that year the faith of Mohammed was strengthened". "Din-i-Muhammad shud Qavi" is the chronogram which yields the year 576. the 'kursinama' or the genealogical table of Maner saints contains a list of the companions of the Imam including Tajuddin Khandagah, Ali Turk Larbak and Qutb Salar, the standard bearer and general of the Imam's party who died fighting for the faith.⁶

The imam is reported to have gone back to Jerusalem leaving behind his three sons, Israel Ismail, and Abdul Aziz and the former's son Ismail, and Abdul Aziz, to carry on the work of the faith in both south and north Bihar. They did not bother themselves about the conquered area and its administration which is said to have been handed over to the Turks led Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiyar and his followers for, as members of the great Suharwardi order they were the missionaries of the faith and their work lay in spiritual and educational spheres. Excepting Ismail, the second son of Imam Taj Faqih, who was sent across the Ganges to North Bihar, and his son Salahuddin and grandson, Sulaiman who were opposed by, and had to fight against the Hindus, there is nothing on record or even preserved by local traditions that the descendants of the Imam had anything to do with active politics. According to the Bayaz of Mulla Taqia of Akbar's time and Fatuh-at-i-Asfia, written in 1660 only a few extracts whereof, relating to Tirhut, were copied out by the late Maulvi Ilyas of Darbhanga before the rare manuscript was destroyed in the great earthquake of 1934, Ismail lived upto the time of Alauddin Khalji and fought thrice with the Raja of Tirhut and was eventually victorious. Perhaps Mulla Taqia really meant Ali Mardan Khalji who is said to have murdered Bakhtiyar after the latter's return from his unsuccessful expedition north of

⁶ Askari., S.H.1998 Islam and Muslims in Medieval Bihar, Khuda Baksh Oriental Library, Patna., P.17

Assam and succeeded him for a time. Seventh in direct descent from Ismail was the celebrated 15th century saint of Bania Basarh near Vaishali, named Shaikh Muhammad Faizullah Qazin Bin Ola Shutari (1495), the greatest disciple of Shaikh Abdullah Shutari order in India. The saint of Mandu was fifth in direct line from Shaikh-us-Shayukh Shihabuddin Suharwardi.

The Shuttari order:

Qazin bin Ola was the progenitor of a long line of saints of the Shuttari order. Of the three sons of Shaikh Qazin, Makhdum Owais Shahid, according to the *Nasab-i-Nama-i-Maner* died at the hands of a chero chief attempting to build a Mosque at Bania Basarh where he is buried. The tomb of Shaikh Abdul Rahman, the second son, is situated in Mhalla Thrayyaganj of Muzaffarpur town, and Abul Fatah Hidayatullah Sarmast, the third son worked and died at Tankol on the bank of Gandak at Hajipur. The Tankol saint (1539) was observing his 'Tai' (continuous) at the age of 14 when Sultan Husain Husain, the exiled Sharqi king of Jaunpur, paid a visit to his revered father, and he himself received the visit the devotion of emperor Humayun when the latter was in a state of war with SherShah. The fame of Shaikh Qazin, the author of *Ma'dan-ul-Asrar* and of his youngest son, Abul Fath, spread far and wide through their chief disciple, Shaikh Zahur Haji Hamid Huzur (1431) of Ratansarai in Saran. He was the spiritual guide of the two famous brothers Shaikh Phool (murdered by prince Hondal) and the renowned Muhammad Ghaus of Gwalior who died in A.H.970 and has been mentioned by Babar and Abul Fazl etc. the last was the Murshid of the scholarly and saintly Shaikh Wajihuddin Gujrati Ahmadabad.⁷ Thus the influence of Shaikh Qazin Ola traveled beyond Bihar to UP, Gujarat, M.P. and also to Punjab. among the other most notable and representative saints of the Shuttari order of Bihar, mention may be made of Shah Ali, the son of Makhdum Owais Shahid, and the founder of Jandaha, his son Shah Alauddin and the latter's great grandson Ruknuddin Abdul Bari (1705). Syed Ali Manjhan Danishmand Rajgiri, the son-in-law of Shaikh Qazin of Bania Basarh, his son, Mir Shihabuddin (1575) and the latter's famous descendants, Maulana Syed Mansur alias Mir Syed Jiwi, the founder of the Rajgir madarsa and his brothers son, the celebrated PIR Syed Imamuddin, the author of many works, including *Manahij-us-Shuttar* (finished on 1 rajab

⁷ Singh, S Some aspects of religion and politics in Delhi Sultanate Period, *The Indian History Review*, Vol.31 Pg.210-20..

1115=1793) were other representative saints of this order. Makhdum Shaikh Mangan and M. Shaikh Taj who lie buried in Mahanagghat, Patna city, near Mosque of Aurangzeb's time also belonged of H. Abul Fath Hadit-ullah Sarmast of Tankd.

Suharwardia and Firdausia order

Suharwardia and Firdausia order were more prominent in South Bihar. The most celebrated and earliest personalities whereof were the descendants of, or connected with, the family of Imam Taj Faqih. His eldest son, Israil and youngest Abdul Aziz, and the former's son, Makhdum Yahya Maneri and the latter's two sons Jalal Maneri and Sulaiman Langar Zamin Kakavi, were all Suharwardi saints. The father-in-law of M. Yahya Maneri and Sulaiman Kakavi, was Shihabuddin Pir Jagjot, a former Qazi of Kashghar who came to preach the faith in Bihar, settled down and died at Jethuli, on 21 september 1266, in the time of Balbun, and was buried at what is still known as Kachchi Dargah, on the banks of Ganges, at a short distance to the east of the old Patna city. He belonged to the Suharwardia order. Of his four saintly daughters, one was married to H.Y. Manerii, father of H. Sharfuddin, his 3 brothers and another to Musa Hamadani, the father of the celebrated Suharwardia Amber, the disciple of Maulana Alauddin Chirmposh of Puraini (Bhagalpur district) who was himself the disciple of Maulana Sulaiman Suharwardi of Mahsya (now in Bengal). Pir Jagjot's daughter who was married to Sulaiman Langar Zamin gave birth to the famous female saint, Bibi Kamal, the mother of another important Suharwardi saint H. Husain Gharib Dhukkarposh of Tajpur, Purnea. He died on 10 safar, 892=October 1490. the fourth daughter was married to Syed Hamid Sufi, son of Adam Sufi and father of Taimullah Sufaidbaz who is buried at Bihar Sharif.

The famous Suharwardi saint, Shaikh Jalal Tabrizi, one of the chief disciples of Shihabuddin Suharwardi also came to Bihar via Delhi and Badaun and from there went to Bengal where his "Chillakhanas" are still found. Bihar also has felt the influence of the Suharwardi order through the activities of the followers of Syed Jalal Bukhari Makhdum Jahanian (d1383) and of still earlier, the celebrated H. Bahauddin Zakaria Multani. Makhdum Syed Hasan, a contemporary of Humayun and SherShah, after whom Hasanpura in Saran district is named and his sons and grandsons, Syed Ahmad of Hajipur, Syed Muhammad of

Mansurganj, Patna and Syed Husain of Bhagalpur all called 'Pir Damaria' were Suharwardia saints and were linked in the chain of spiritual disciplinship to Makhdum Jahanian⁸. Maulana Ahmad Damishqi, one of the 'Khalifas' of Bahauddin Zakaria Multani was the spiritual guide of Maulana Taqiuddin Suharwardi of Mahsum in Bengal. The last mentioned personage was the author of Multaqat, which is an abridged version of 'Ihya-ul-ulum' of the celebrated Imam Ghazzali, and he was the inspirer of many Suharwardi saints of Bihar including Yahya Maneri, the father of the renowned Makhdum Sharfuddin, the greatest Muslim saint that Bihar produced.

Sharfuddin Ahmad Maneri was the son of Maneri, a great Sufi saint who was born in Maner in 661 A.H. his pen-name being Sharaf Behari. After completion of his education, he became a disciple of Sheikh Najeebuddin of Delhi and received spiritual inspirations from him. He came to Biharsharif in 725 A.H. where he lived till the last days of his life and where he died on Thursday, the 6th, Shawal 782 A.H. besides his spiritual pursuits he was prone to literary endeavors too. He left behind him a dozen of books. Some of them are published. He was a poet and used to compose poems in Persian as well as Urdu which was then termed as Hindi or Hindustani.⁹

The tomb of Makhdoom Yahya Maneri is called Barhi Dargah at Maner, as distinguished from the magnificent Mausoleum of Shaikh Bayazid known as Shah Daulat; eighth in direct descent from Imam Taj Faqih through Shah Kaliluddin, a son of Shah Yahya Maneri, and called as Choti Dargah, has always been held in great veneration and was visited among others by princes and kings including Sultan Sikander Lodi and Babur. Khwaja Abdus Samad, the sister's son of Abul Fazl and Faizi, in his rare work, Akhbarul Asfia, writes "Shaikh Yahya Bin Israil, the author of Siraj-ul-Majd was one of the great personalities of his time. His grandfather (Imam Taj Faqih) came from a holy place of Khalil (Jerusalem) to Maner where he fixed up the standard of Islam and then went back to his home. Shaikh Yahya received spiritual inspiration (indirectly) from Shaikh Shihabuddin Suharwardi and Shaikh Najamuddin Firdausi (Kubra). Although he was a product of the Indian realm, yet in this very country he traversed the world of reality with his bold steps and

⁸ Askari, Op.Cit,Pg20.

⁹ Sher.,S.A. Contribution of Bihar to Arabic, Persian and Islamic Learning, IOPSRAP, Patna 1983,P51.

stuck to the right path laid down by his predecessors. He perfected his spiritual experiences at Maner where he found his final resting place on 11 august 1291.although he had reached a very advanced age and his physical strength has declined, yet for fulfilling the spiritual inspiration of God's creations he continued to seek help from the sacred teachings of the holy personages of his times." The statement of this 16th century biographer of saints that Yahya Maneri met H.Sharfuddin of Paniput and named his eldest and greatest son after him may or may not be true, but he was certainly misinformed to say that the former was a contemporary of Muhammad Tughlaq. He has himself given the correct date of Yahya's death as A.H.690.¹⁰

Next in importance was H.Ahmad Chirmposh, the saint of Amber the spiritual disciple of Shaikh Alauddin Chirmposh of Puraini (Bhagalpur) who was linked through Shaikh Sulaiman of Mahsun to the famous Maulana Taqiuddin Suharwardi of Mahsun referred to above. He according to Mr. Oldham, who writes on the authority of a manuscript by Mir Amanullah of Aurangzeb's time, was the spiritual guide of the founder of Ghazipur., the warrior-saint Syed Masud, entitled Malik-us-Saadat-i-Ghazi, the father of Syed Rajah, after whom Sarai Syed Rajah was named. The 17th century Shuttari saint, Pir Ruknuddin of Jandaha (Muzaffarpur district) tells us how Firuz Shah Tughlaq, on the occasion of his expedition to Bengal came to Bihar town, paid a visit to Ahmad Chirmposh and his cousin Ahmad Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri. The author of they rare history, Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi gives a detailed account of the interview between the Sultan of Delhi and H.Ahmed Chirmposh. Besides those already mentioned there were other saints of Suharwardi order who did much for the faith, had a great following in their times and still command respect of large sections of muslims in Bihar. It would suffice to mention here only two outstanding personalities of the 17th century. One was Pushto speaking Diwan Shah Arzan (d.1028=1618) of Patna who with Shaikh Husain of Lahore received the Khirqah (religious robe) and Irshad (Spiritual dirtection) from Shaikh Bahlol Qadri of Punjab but became a disciple of Shaikh Abu Turab Madani Suharwardi, on the occasion of pilgrimage to Mecca. The other Suharwardi Sufi was Maulana Muhammad Shabbaz (d.1077=1666), a great traditionalist and a founder of the long continued Madarsa or college of Mulna Chak, Bhagalpur and the spiritualk disciple of

¹⁰ Askari.,S.H. Op. Cit., P.21

Maulana Yasin Suharwardi who lies buried in Biharsharif besides the road to Daira. The mausoleum of Mir Syed Muhammad Kan M. Bada Badesustani and the tomb of his sister's son, Shah Husain in Kaghzi muhalla are still objects of veneration in Biharsharif but their Silsila has become extinct. Makhdoom Bade Sustani was one of the greatest saints of Bihar and the celebrated 14th century saint. H.Sharfuddin paid annual visits to his Kauza for 12 years to offer Fatiha.

The Chistia order:

A precursor of the great pioneer of the Chisti order of Sufis, the oldest Darwesh order in India, Khwaja Muinuddin of Ajmer (d.627=1230), was Syed Husain Khingsawar who according to the author of Akhbar-ul-Asfia and Mirat-ul-Asrar was appointed Governor of Ajmer but was killed in 610-1213, the year of the death of Qutbuddin Aibak, and lies buried at Tara hill, there.¹¹ Local traditions supported by later documents Ahmad and the latter's sister's son, Syed Muhammad, called Mamoon Bhanja, died as martyrs for the faith at Jaruha, near Hajipur where their mausoleum damaged in the earthquake of 1934, was built, it is said at the instance of Shiva Singh, the Hindu Rajah of Simroan in Tithut. The mother of Naseeb (Nusrat) Shah of Bengal caused the water of "Zamzum", the holy spring of Mecca, to be brought and thrown into the well adjoining this mausoleum to sanctify its water. Rajah Man Singh Kachhawaha, when governor of Bihar, granted in 999=1590, 15 bighas of land for the upkeep of mausoleum and the facsimile of the bilingual 'Sanad' which refers to the "Sanads granted by the previous rulers" and their verification by the deceased Sadr, Qazi Yaqub, (son-in-law of Qazi Fazilat of Sher shah's time) has been already published in Bengal past and present: Calcutta 1. traces and evidences are available of many others of 14th century who lost their lives while preaching their faith, such as Ali Sher of Bihar, Sheikh Fattu and Shaikh Burhan of Salimabad Pargana who lie buried in village Bagazer in South Bihar. Chandan Shahid, Shah Budan and Shah Shamsul Haque of Sasaram also belonged to Chistia order.

¹¹ Sufi Cults, Politics and conversion: The Chistis of the Sultanate Period, The Indian History Review, Vo22, Pg190-97.

Some of the earlier Chistia saints of Bihar were Shah Mahmud Bihari and Syed Tajuddin of Dinapur, the disciples of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d.633=1233), Maulana Ali Bihari, a disciple of Baba Farid Shakarganj (d.664=1265). Makhdum Adam Sufi (d.697=1297), son of Syed Ibrahim Chisti of later Hajipur (d.657=1258) and his son M.Hamiduddin (d.736=1329), a son-in-law of Shihabuddin Pirjagot of Jethuli (derived from Ji-uthli). Makhdum Hamiduddin Chisti's son Taimullah Sufaid Baz (d.790=1388) was the spiritual guide of his son. Faizullah of Kurji, near Dinapur (d.831=1427), of Shamsuddin alias Shah Saman of Arval (Gaya) and of Sufi Ziauddin of Chandhaus (d.821=1418), a direct descendant of the celebrated Qutbuddin Munawwar (d.760=1358) and Jamal Hanswi (d.670=1271), the great grandson of Baba Farid Shakarganj. Taimullah Sufaid Baz was married in Mahalla 'Chistiana' of Biharsharif which is adjacent to 'Bhainsasur' where lie buried a large number of Chisti saints including Ahmad Isa Taj, the younger brother of the celebrated Chistia saint, Muhammad Isa Taj of Jaunpur, a son-in-law of Syed Jalal Bukhari Makhdum Jahanian.¹² An important Chisti saint of Darbhanga Makhdum Sultan Hussain who died in 815=1412.

There was a close connection between the Chisti saints of Pandua, Bengal and those of Bihar. Abdul Fattah Chisti, the founder of Qazitola in Dinapur (b.887=1482, d.993=1527), seventh from Jainair to Bihar in the time of the Khaljis. Ali Sher died fighting with the natives and he lies buried in Bihar town, but Syed Mubarak went to Bengal, became a disciple of Akhi Sirajuddin Uthman of Gaur (d.743=1342), a disciple of the celebrated Nizammuddin Aulia of Delhi, and returned to Dinapur, where he built a mosque and a Khanqah at a place where his 'Pir' had once stayed. He was followed as Qazia till the end of 17th century.

Akhi Siraj had taken from Bihar Syed Ibrahim, the young son of Jamal Aulia, a first cousin of Nizamuddin Aulia and had him married with the sister of the wife of his famous disciple and successor, Shaikh Alaul Haque of Pandua (d.786=1384) both being sisters of the Bihar saint of Choti Dargah, named H.Badr-i-Alam Badr Zahidi. Pir Badr-i-ALAM OF Junaidia order (d.844=1440) was the great grandson of Shaikh Fakhruddin Zahid (d.704=1304) and the grandson of Shaikh Shihabuddin Haqqo who was killed by the orders

¹² Ibid.

of Muhammad Tughlaq for denying the the justification of the titlke of Sultan-i-Adl assumed by him. Being invited by Sharfuddin Maneri he left Merath for Bihar where he arrived after the death of the great Maneri saint in 782=1380. His descendants through the daughter of a Rajput chief are to be found in Biharsharif, Soh, Chawki in Saran district and other places in the Bihar province. He is said to have married another lady of the ruling family of Jaunpur. He is also famous in Bengal, especially among the class, whom he converted to Islam during the course of his travels in East Bengal and Chittagong and the nale is invariably invoked by those in Bengal who ply their boats on the water there. One of the most revered saints of Bihar, H.Fariduddin Tawaila Bukhsh Chisti (d.897=1491), of Chandpura which has a mosque containing an inscription, dated 710, was the son of Syed Ibrahim Chisti rewferred to above. He was brought up at pandua and after practicing severe austerities, became a disciple of the famous Nur Qutb Alam of Pandua (d.818=1415), the son and successor of Alaul Haque. He was sent to Bihar along with three others, including Shah Saa'dat of Benolia in Bihar Sharif and H.Ataullah Baghdadi, a descendant of the founder of Qadri order, who lies buried in Mariam Tola, Biharsharif and whose 'Silsila' is still functioning in Bihar. Sixth in direct line from Farid Tawaila Buksh was Diwan Abdul Wahhab (d.1096=1684) of Choti Takia , a learned and saintly personage, who converted a large number of people of what came to be known as Barahgawan. The tomb of Shah Jalal Ganj-i-Rawan is situated on Takia-i-kalan, Biharsharif. Anther branch of this Chisti Silsila was represented by the saints of Daira or Barahdari. The Chisti saints of Ashrafia Khanqah of Beetho (Gaya) founded by Syed Abu Sayeed Kathanawaz, also were linked with Akhi Siraj and Alaul Haque of Pandua, Bengal, through the latter's discipline,H.Ashraf Jahangir Simnani of Kachhauchha (Faizabad,U.P.)

The Qadria order entered Bihar in a much latter time nevertheless it was strong with chief centre at Phulwarisharif. Notable among Chisti saints were Shaikh Manjhan Kunjnashin who lies buried in mahalla Sakanut of Biharsharif and H.Qumais of Sadhaura where 'Takia' is situated within the fort area of the town. He was a contemporary of Akbar¹³. He died in Bihar on his way from Bengal to his native place, Sadhaura where his dead body was carried to be buried. But the first important personage of whom we have a contemporary account by

¹³ Askari,S.H. Maasir, Vol.3, Patna,1952, Pg.18.

one of his Meccan companions, Ali Sher, who lies buried at Kutumba in Aurangabad subdivision of Gaya, was Syed Muhammad of Amjhar (Gaya District), a direct descendant of the celebrated Abdul QadirJilani (d.1166 AD.). We learn from Manaqib-i-Muhammadi of Ali sher that a muslim missionary, named Shaikh Muhammad Ali, who was working for his faith in the wild tracts bordering on Chotanagpur division, ruled over by the Kols, was oppressed and his brother and whole family were killed by the fanatical natives on the orders of Jiwan, the Kol chief. Shaikh Ali's frantic appeals for help to the then governor of Bihar, Darya Khan Nuhani, evoked no response. He went to Mecca where his pathetic story made an impression on Syed Muhammad Qadri of Baghdad and Kolan and Domra in Aurangabad subdivision of Gaya have been mentioned as the places where the self-imposed work of preaching had resulted in a calamity. The saint came with a number of followers from the west via Multan and Surharpur in U.P. (1442-43) met Jiwan and asked him in vain to allow the work of peaceful propaganda. Excessive rain caused the demolition of the part of the mud-fort of the Kol chief who was killed and his brother, Karmun and son, Chandra also met with their death in a miraculous manner. Hearing of a Qadri saint and of the gathering of large number of people around him, Darya Khan ordered a Kushk or villa to be built for him at a place which came to be known as 'Narahna' from the hindi saying of the saint, who disliked publicity and preferred selfless work in silence.

Shaikh Ali would not allow his followers to become ease-loving and decided to shift top another place for preaching his faith among the wild tribes. To the simple minded head 'Gwala' who had become a convert and was named Sadiq and who had expressed surprise at this move, the saint said "Namana jayyo inhan na rahna" (I do not wish to stay here: I must go). An important Qadri saint of Hajipur, Bihar, was Mulla Khwaja Bihari a disciple of celebrated Lahori saint, Miyan Mir, the spiritual guide of Prince Dara Shikoh (d.1045). he predicted the future greatness and Vizirship of the famous Sa'daullah Khan, the Prime Minister of Shahjahan. Another great but later Qadri saint of all-bihar importance was Diwan Syed Muhammad Jafar Binodpuri of Barh whose father was also saintly personage. The diwan died 1106=1694 and has left behind some works.

The Madaria order was also strong in Bihar at one point of time. perhaps the greatest of then four disciples of H.Badiuddin Madar, sometime a teacher of H.Husain Muiz Balkhi at

Zafarabad, Jaunpur, whose mausoleum at Makanpur is still an object of veneration of both Hindus and Muslims, was the extremely pious and ascetic personage H. Jamaluddin Hurmuzi known as Jaman Jati (Yati). He lies buried at Hisla, within a domed mausoleum built in 950=1543 by Jaman Madari of Darbhanga. Shah Kangan Diwana who lies buried in Biharsharif was also a disciple of H. Shah Badiuddin Madar of Makanpur. The Madaria Qalandars who performed their devotion every year in a peculiar Indian way by walking on fire have disappeared. H. Abdul Quddus Gangohi of the 15th century writes about his 'Pir', H. Abdul Haque of Rudauli that the latter met some 'Majdhubans' in Bihar while he was on his way to and from Pandua, Bengal. Such distracted bare-bodied religious zealots, often referred to in early literature are not found now¹⁴.

Each Sufi order had its share in the general spread and development of Islam in different parts of the province, there was no difference in the cardinal principles and tenets of the various orders and there was no bar to people of one order getting permission (Ijazat) and initiation (Ba 'iat) from the saints of the other orders. They differed from one another in name, sometimes in respect of garb or dress, and mostly about the rules and methods of meditation (fikr), recitation (Zikr) and their attitude towards Dhikr audition (Sama) and vocal music. The Shuttaria called Madhlab or Mashrab (mode of conduct) rather than order (Khanwadah) were closely connected with the Firdausia and Suharwardia, but unlike them and the Chistia, and like the Naqshbandia and even the Qadaria, they rejected Sama, music or singing. The Shuttaria and also the Madaria and Qalandria which at one time occupied an important position in Bihar have no wunk into the background. The Naqshbandia did not attain any vogue in early times in Bihar. The oldest and the most widely-dispersed were the orders of the Suharwardia and the Chistia, and though they still hold the field like the Qadria in many parts, they were all eclipsed by the Firdausia order. In fact, owing to the towering personalities of H. Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri and of his immediate successors, the Balkhi saints, the Firdausia order has always held a position of special prominence in Bihar. The saints of this 'Silsila' which was an offshoot of the great Suharwardia order constantly added to its strength, and what is more important, they have left behind a considerable literature in the form of Makhtubat, Malfuzat, Isharat, Aurads and other mystical tracts from which we

¹⁴ Franklin, S The Madariya order of Sufism, OUP, Oxford, 1998.

can form some idea of their beliefs, beliefs, preaching and outlook, and also get something that is of cultural and historical value.

Many of the early Sufis of eastern India were not only devotees of God and men of Piety and austere habits and practices but were also learned and scholarly people. Unfortunately many of their works have been lost owing to the ravages of time and climates, fire and disturbance and neglect and distractions of their owners, especially in recent times of shifting population.

The saintly authors did not write anything about themselves. Sometimes they did not like their mystical writings to be in the hands of all and sundry. H. Muzaffar Shams Balkhi (d. 803=1400) strongly enjoined upon one of his addressees, Qazi Zainuddin "not to show his letters on any account to others" and says "I too did not bring out the letters of my Shaikh (Sharfuddin Maneri). You will cause annoyance to me if any one sees my letters" and he gives the reason "the volatile and conventional people will not comprehend the discourses of this poor man". Hundreds of letters which H. Sharfuddin Maneri wrote to his greatest disciple and successor, Maulana Muzaffar, during the course of a quarter of a century were buried according to his will, with him, and only 28 of them which fortunately escaped the notice of his successor were found later and published under the name of "Muktubat-i-Bist-o-Hasht". There are a few such letters also in the Maktubat of the Maulana.¹⁵

The injunction not to make the abstruse dissertations generally known to the public especially on God, creation, soul, will or determination and predestination, etc had an unfortunate result in that even other things which might have been valuable for a student of history were tied up in manuscripts and kept out from the public till they were lost forever.

Of the large number of works which Hazrat Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri, wrote or caused to be written, only a few not exceeding 30 have come down to us, and all these were written or compiled during the last five decades of his earthly career. Born at Maner, then a flourishing town in Patna district in 661=1262 he died and buried in Bihar Sharif in 782=1380. he was a boy in teens reading Masadir and Miftahul Lughat when he was taken to

¹⁵ Askar, Op. Cit P.31

Sonargaon by his namesake Maulana Sharfuddin Tawama, a great sage of Bukhara, then on his way from Delhi to Bengal, under the orders of the then Sovereign to Delhi. Though he completed his scholastic attainments and became well versed in all the branches of Muslim learning including the mystic philosophy, he did not write any book at Sonargaon. Owing to his excessive devotion to learning and austere spiritual practices, he fell ill was advised to marry and a son born to him whom he took to Maner on the death of his saintly father, in 690. he soon left for Delhi in quest of spiritual preceptor, met the renowned saints Nizammuddin Aulia and Sharfuddin Bu Ali Qalandhar Panipati, but accepted as his Shaikh, Najibuddin Firdausi who died in 691=1291, a few days after handing over to him his written instructions. On the way back to his home with his brother Jaliluddin, the voice of an ostrich threw him in such an ecstatic condition that he flew into the then dense jungle of Behea (Shahabad) and was heard of no more for 12 years. He wandered about in jungles of Shahabad and hills of Rajgir, Monghyr and Morang for about 30 years practicing austerities and leading the life of a religious recluse like the Hindu Sanyasis, subsisting on what he could get from the hands of nature and also what he could get from the hands of nature and also what what came unasked from others. It was in the hills of Rajgir that he was discovered by Nizam Maula, a disciple of Nizammuddin Aulia and was requested to pay a visit to Bihar town. After some time the saint volunteered to come on foot every Friday to Bihar Sharif to impart instructions to his admirers.¹⁶

The weekly visits to Bihar town must have begun in the twenties of the eighth century, for once when Qazi Zahid, a devotee, asked him "he is the same mad (inspired) man of Panipat" obviously, this refers to H. Sharfuddin Bu Ali Qalandhar who was alive till 724 or 1324. abul Fazal, his nephew, Abdus Samad and their contemporary, the great traditionalist, Maulana Abdul Haque of Delhi, the author of Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, obviously relied upon a common source which misled them to write that Nizammuddin Aulia had died before the arrival of the great saint of Bihar in Delhi. He has himself referred to his having seen Maulana Ziauddin Simnani who as strictly orthodox muslim, was always up against 'Sama' and use of music and singing therein, and bitterly criticized H. Nizamuddin Aulia (d. 725) whom he predeceased. "He was both a traditionalist and commentator of the holy

¹⁶ Jackson, P Sharfuddin Maneri: The Hundred Letters, Paulist Press, New York, Pg54.

book. One day I attended a “Tadhkir” (religious discourse) delivered by him”. This must have happened before 725=1325.

After sometime Nizam Maula set up a “Do-Chapra” for the weekly sermons of the great saints of Bihar out of his Mal-i-Muzakka (legitimately earned money). This was later converted into a residential house, outside the general habitations, which came to be called Safipur. The saint continued the practice of descending from the hills of Rajgir, where his ‘Chilla’ cave still exists, and walking all the way on foot every week to and from Bihar so long as his health permitted it, his aged mother and his only son had already been brought from Maner to Bihar town and he was also at last persuaded to stay there permanently “friends”, he said, “your association with me has brought me to such a pass as to be installed in this place of idols.” It was from about this time that this great saint began to use his pen and paper for solving the mystic problems raised by his inquisitive and religious minded disciples in their letters. Though he had already begun to deliver his oral discourses, these were now compiled in the shape of his Maktubat and Malfuzat

The best known, widely used and the most highly spoken of his works, Maktubat Sadi is a collection of 100 letters on mystical doctrines and the basic principles of Islam which were addressed mostly to and at the request of Qazi Shamsuddin, “Hakim-i-Chausa” (near Baxar in Shahabad district). The letters practically cover the chief topics of Sufism and Islam and they were compiled in 743=1346 by Zainuddin Badr-i-Arabi, the chief attendant of the saint¹⁷. Aurabgaze, the learned Mughal emperor, had by his side and Abul Fazl his nephew, Addus Samad, Maulana Abdul Haque, and others took it to be the best of his works and have given extracts from it in their books. They also refer to the earliest collection of the discourses of the saint entitled Madanul-Mani, delivered up to 15 Shaban, 746, December 2, 1346 which were compiled in two volumes by Zain Badr-i-Arabi and were verified and checked by the saint himself. The language of these discourses or Malfuzat is a little different from that of the Maktubat and is naturally simpler and suited to the needs and understanding of the questioners in the Majlis or assemblies of the saint. Not only intricate problems of mystical philosophy and sufistic doctrines were discussed but juristic points, ethical principles and social percepts were explained and taught in those religious assemblies which

¹⁷ Ibid, Pg55.

were attended by people from far and near, high and low. Illustrative anecdotes from past events and copious apt verses of classical mystical poets were also given. Therefore the value of these Malfuzat or collections of general reader than for the Sufistic expert. Their number is also greater than of the Maktubat.

A second collection of 152 letters on similar Sufistic points as the first compiled by the same Zain Badr-i-Arabi, 22 years after, in 1328 and addressed to a greater number of people than the first has been sometimes named as Maktubat-i-Do-Sadi. The manuscript copy of the Khudabaksh library, Patna contains the additional 40 letters and the compiler's name is given in it is "Mohammad Bin Isa-al-Balkhi". There is another copy of this work in the Balkhi khanqah of Fatuha (Fatuha) (Patna district). There is a third collection of letters on Sufistic topics called 'Maktubat-i-she-sadi' and published in Lahore, but the number of letters in it are slightly less than 300, and the first 200 are the same as in the second collection. The additional letters include one addressed to Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq sent in reply to one of his own. The fourth collection of 28 letters, called 'Makhtubat-i-Bisht-o-Hasht has been referred to above. The cataloguer of India Office Library wrongly ascribes two other sets of letters, one to the great saint, and the other to his father which he names 'Maktubat-i-Hazrat Yahya Maneri". The names of the addresses given appear to have little or no connection with the great saint of Bihar.

As regards the Malfuzat, Lataif-i-Ma'ni, is really an abridged version of Ma'dan-ul-Ma'ni. A supplement to the latter, Khan-i-Pur-N'mat, compiled by Zain Badr-i-Arabi, contains the discourses delivered between 15 shaban, 749=Nov.9,1248, and the end of Shawwal, 751 December 1350. Besides mystic matters, it contains some valuable observation of cultural interest. Ganj-i-la-Yafna and Tuhfa-i-Ghalib containing the discourses of the years 760=1358 and 770=1368 were compiled by Syed Shihabuddin Halifi. He was the compiler of Maghzul-Mani also which has been divided into 33 (fasals). The contents of both were checked and verified by the saint at the request of the compiler. Bahrul-Ma'ni also called Kanz-ul-safar of 762=1360-61 were compiled by the same Zain-Badr-Arabi, while Munis-ul-Muridin covering the discourses of 21 Majlis from Muharram to Shaban,775-(June 1372 to January,1373) was compiled by Salah Makhliis Daud Khani, a devoted disciple of the saint. Among other things these Malfuzat contain some new points of historical interest

which will be discussed in the latter chapter. Other less known Malfuzata include Asbab-ul-Najat and Mirat-ul-Muhaqqiqin. The widely used Rahat-ul-Qulaub, the last compilation of Zain, is a short tract contains 20 printed pages. It gives some account of what the great saint said and in his last 10 majlis, shortly before his death, on 6 shawal, 782=January,4,1381.

The books from the pen of the great saint which are easily available include such tracts as Irshad-ul-Talihin (also called Burhan-ul-Arifin), Irshad-us-Salikh, Risala-i-Makki which deal with the seeker of God, unitysm and spiritual practices of Dhikr and Muraqaba respectively and three sets of 'aurad', big, middling and small, (prayer exercises). Aqaid-i-Sharafi is also a book of prayer and it also deals with mystic beliefs and Fawaid-ul-Muridin contains religious and moral instructions for followers. The very title of 'Risala-i-Wajudia' is suggestive of its contents. Fawaid-i-Rukni and Ajwaba-i-Zahidi, though small are important treaties, the first being written in response to a request for mystic instructions of a pilgrim to Mecca, Haji Ruknuddin Zair-ul-Haramain, and the other, containing replies in simple and easily intelligible language to a set of 40 or more questions of Sufistic import raised by different devotees. 'Isharat-i-Sharafia' which contains 36 short letters of which each letter is pregnant with deep ideas, is mainly concerned with the Sufistic conception of 'Wahdat-ul-Wujud' or unity of being. Six of the letters were addressed to Mirdad, who has probably given his name to a muhalla which still exists in Biharsharif, and four are in the names of 'ShahBAZ alias Gorakh'. Last, but not the least, is what has been taken to be a standard work on Sufism in Bihar. Is is a voluminous 'Shrah' or commentary, spread over 453 folios, with 19 lines to a page, on the well-known Arabic treatise, Adab-ul-Muridin, by Shaikh Ziauddin Abun Najib Abdul Qahir Suharwardi, who died in 563=1167 and 532=1234-35 respectively. The commentary was begun at the request of Qazi Ashraf in Rabi,1, 1363, and finished in Dhihijja 766=August,1364. some marginal notes (Hashia) on this commentary, largelu used in Bihar, are from the pen of the 18th century scholar and logician, Qazi Ghulam Yahya of Barh.

The learned Maulana Muzaffar Shams-Balkhi, who had given up his professional job in Firuz Shah Tughlaq's Arabic college, situated in Khuski-i-lal, at Delhi, to become a disciple of H.Sharfuddin of Bihar, in preference to his senior cousin, H.Ahmed Chirmposh of Amber of whom his father, Shamshuddin had become a 'Murid' and devotee, had a very self-

denying and puritanical outlook¹⁸. He shunned all worldly things, gave away in charity all that came into his hands, including his valued books, used knots instead of needle and thread to mend his torn clothes, tied his 'Izar' or trousers with 'Munj' string, and divorced his wives and himself married them with others whenever he found that his growing affection for them was likely to affect his love and devotion to God. And yet he was on terms of correspondence not only with Shaikhs and Ulemas and common people but also officials, nobles and a king of Bengal, as we find from his voluminous Maktubat containing 181 letters. His *Shrh-i-Mashriq-ulAnwar*, a standard work on tradition, *Sharh-i-Auida-i-Hafizia*, and a small Diwan of mystic poems, have been preserved for posterity. Equally learned, but perhaps rigid and more liberal in outlook was H. Husain Muiz, entitled *Nausha-i-Tauhid*, his fellow disciple (Mustarshid), nephew, pupil and constant companion in his frequent journeys to the holy places in Arabia and Aden in which latter place he died in 803 and lies buried. Shaikh Husain's Malfuz, entitled *Ganj-i-la Yakhfa*, containing the discourses of 57 majlis, his Maktubat consisting of 154 letters on mystic subjects including one addressed to Ibrahim Shafi of Jaunpur, a treatise in Arabic named *Hazarat-i-Khams* (5 different planes of existence) on the problem of divine unity, and his collections of mystic poems, including a Mathnavi entitled *Chahar Darwesh*, are more generally known, but the *Fatuha Khanqah* of the Balkhis has some other works also such as *Risala-i-Khair-o-Sharr*, *Qaza-o-Qadar*, *Risala-i-Muhammadia*, *Aurad-i-dah Fasli*, *Risala-i-Tauhid*, and *Risala-i-Akhsy-ul-Khas*. His mosque and tomb at Paharpur in Bihar Sharif where he died in 844=1440 and lies buried can still be seen. Husain's son Shaikh Hasan Balkhi (d.855=1451), wrote small tracts such as *Risala-i-ma'ni-dhat-wajh-o-nafs*, *Risala-i-Hast*, and was the compiler of *Lataef-ul-Ma'ni*, but his most well known work is *Kashif-ul-Asrar*, a commentary in Persian of his father's Arabic *Risala*.

Hasan's son and successor, Ahmad Langar-i-Darya (d.891=1486) was an eminent saint, a good scholar and a poet with a small Diwan to his credit. He is more well known because of his valuable Malfuz, *Munis-ul-Qulub*, which contains a mine of information about the Bihari saints of the firdausia order. This Malfuz supplements the earliest works such as

¹⁸ Op. Cit, Indian Historical Review, Pg 34-87.

Manaqib-ul-Asfia, Malfuz of Maulana Amun, and Risalai-Bahram Bihari and it amplifies the references in them and gives additional information of historical and cultural value.

The writings of these Sufi saints of Bihar, show that they were thoroughly acquainted with the works of master thinkers and theorists, not only of Sufism but those of other sections of the Muslims. Sufistic theosophy had already reached its highest point before its introduction in Bihar in the 13th century. H.Sharfuddin Maneri made use, in his own way, of what his great predecessors had written and said on the subject of Islamic Mysticism and quoted from them in support of his own contention, arguments of his own. He has frequently made mention of, and given extracts from the works of such celebrated mystic writers as Khwaja Zianuddin Abun Najib (Adabul-Muridin), Shaikh-us-Shuyukh Shihab-uddin (Awarif), Abu Talib Makki (Quwwat-ul-Qulub), Hujjatul Islam Imam Ghazzali (Ihya-ul-Ulum, Wasaya) Abul Qasim-al-Qushairi (Risala), Qazi-ul-Quzzat Hamadani (Tamhidat, Zubda, Maktubat etc). Shaikh Abu Nasar-as-Sarraj (Allama) Mohiuddin Ibn-i-Arabi (Fususul-Hikam and Futuhut-i-Makkia), Abdullah-al-Harith bin Asad-al-Muhasabi Basari (Muhasiba and Aririaya), Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (Ghuniat-ul-Talibin) and Futuhul Ghaib), Ali bin Uthmani Jullabi Hujwiri (Kashf-ul-Mahjub). He has drawn copiously upon the classical mystic poems of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (M,athnavi), Khwaja Fariduddin Attar (Mantiq-ul-Tair, ASrar Nama, etc) Iraqi (Lama't) Khwaja ABU Sayeed, Abul Khair (Rubayyat), Thanai, (Hadiqat-ul-Haqiqah) Amir Khusro, Saadi, Khaqani etc. Qazi Hamiduddin Naguri, Siyar ul Arifin and Tazkirat-ul-Aulia have been also utilized.

The saintly author of Manaqib-ul-Asfia, while dilating on the distinctive position of H.Sharfuddin, his great cousin rightly gives him credit for his high discourses on the subtleties of the path and the secrets of the reality and knowledge for his amazing words about love and friendship and for his multifarious works on 'Tawassuf'. He points out, we are told further, the secrets of the divine unity and knowledge of one reality as conceived by the Unitarian and men of truth like Imam Ahmad and Muhammad Ghazzali, Ain-ul-Quzzat, Ibn-i-Arabi, Attar, Iraqi, Rumi and these were expounded by him in India as none had done before. Prior to him very few in India had studied the observations of these great men, and if some had gone through them, they had not realized their purport and import.

Very seldom the Malfuzat of the Indian saints had made mention of the views and sayings of those great men and if they mentioned them they did that in a sarcastic tone. As for instance in chapter 8 of Siraj-ul-Arifin of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, the latter is said to have remarked that whatever might he said about the child of the Hamadani Qazi as a learned man and as a knower (Arif), he could not attain 'Darweshi' at the age of 20. Ain-ul-Quzzat was also found fault with for having gone beyond the limits of the canon law in his letters. On the other hand, H.Sharfuddin Maneri, has praised very much the observations of "that self-effacing lover, that inebriated one with the love of eternal God, Qazi-Ainul Quzzat. He has said in Ma'dan-ul-Ma'ni (Chapter 20) that "although everyone has written something on knowledge of God, yet few have done so in such a way as to be in accord with the rules and principles of the faith as we find in the Tamhidat of Ainul Quzzat".

About Awarif, the great saint, Makhdum Sharfuddin said that it was a standard work on Tawassuf but something more and better was expected from its great author.¹⁹ H.Shuaib says that 'Ainul-Quzzat's views were shared by Imam Muhammad Ghazzali (d.505=1111) and other great men. He had Ahmad Ghazzali (d.517=1123) as his spiritual preceptor and died very young in 533=1138 (527 according to Haji Khalifa). His letters which consist of highly speculative comments on esoteric meanings of the Quranic texts and percepts of the Muslim creed have been criticized instead of being commended by many.

H.Sharfuddin Maneri and his Balkhi successors seem to have been fully acquainted with all that had been written and said on the characteristic themes of Islamic Sufism by scholastic theologians, , philosophers and the Sufi mystics. They were familiar with the views on 'Tauhid' or divine unity, unity behind all plurality, reality behind the phenomenal multiplicity of the people belonging to the subjective school who like Ibn-i-Arabi (d.638=1240) identified the 'Haq' (truth or reality) with 'Khalq' (creation) as distinguished from appearance conceiving 'Khalq' in its unity and ultimate reality. The Wugudias say "the one reality is God", "he is all". They hold that "There is nothing real but God, the only existence, the supreme being or essence", and they say that the one and the many are only names for two objective aspects of the one reality, this reality is God, the Bihar saints are conscious about Wujudiat not completely agreeing with the Islamic concept that God as the

¹⁹ Jackson, Op.Cit. Pg87.

creator is transcendental to all that he had created. They also anticipate the views of those who are of the objective (Shuhudiya) school, though H.Sharfuddin does not mention its real founder who was Alauddin Simnani, his senior contemporary (d.734=1334) and who affirmed that "Everything is from him" (Hama as ust) implying a sort of duality despite the differences of 'I' and 'Thou', for the shadow can not become the substance (God)

The Firdausia saints of Bihar were fully aware of all the criticisms that were made in the history of Islamic thoughts, and all the objections which were raised against Ibn-i-Arabi and other monistic thinkers who are sometimes confused with pantheistic people. Infact, as against the views of more or less pantheistic thinkers of the Ibn-i-Arabi school, some Sufis like Alauddin Simnani had advanced the view that just as shadow or 'Zil' is not identical with 'Haq' and as such does exist cannot be identical with 'Haq'. An urdu poet has beautifully expressed his belief in the theory of Wahdat-us-Shuhud in his line "Na Tha Kuchh To Khuda Tha, Kuchh Na Hota To Khuda Hota-Duboya Mujhko Hone ne Na Hota Main To Kya Hota" equally well the other theory of Wahadat-ul-Wajud been put by a Persian poet in his famous lines "Man Tu Shudham Tu Man Tan Shudam Tu Jan ShudiTa Kas Nagoyad Bad Azin Man Digaram Tu Digaree".²⁰

The greatest of the Firdausia Sufis of Bihar and also others appear to be inclined, on the whole less towards the views of Ibn-i-Arabi, than towards those of Attar, Rumi and A'in-ul-Quzzat Hamadani, and are 'Wajudia' in their views and these do not correspond with those of the Sufi thinkers, who are known as 'Shuhudia'.²¹ But in their interpretation of the Wahdat-ul-Wujud they try to make their system conformable to the strictest standard of orthodoxy their doctrine of the identity of the being, is not necessarily the same as that of the other exponents and to identify their Sufism with unqualified Pantheism would be unfair and misleading. According to H.Sharfuddin, the traveler in Tafrid' (Spiritual inwardness of the self) becomes so immersed in the one as to lose consciousness of all 'otherness', but he says whatever the stage, whether of 'Iim' (Knowledge of Gnosticism) or 'Shuhud' (Spiritual vision) the slave remains a slave and God is God. The one reality (al-Haqq) or God is the Lord, the many (al-khalq) or the created being or the phenomenal world are the slaves. A

²⁰ Askari, Op. Cit. P.40.

²¹ Dayal, I. Popular literature and Pre-modern societies in South Asia, Pearson, Delhi, 2002 Pg32.

man does not become God. Fana or self-effacement and dying to oneself do not imply identity with God, but complete detachment from everything other than God and a contact with god who alone exists in his eyes. The devotees die to himself to live in God. There is no question of physical absorption, identification or reappearance and reincarnation. Indeed the Bihari Sufis were all strictly orthodox Sunni Muslims. The Quran and the Sunna (Traditions of the Prophet's words and deeds) were accepted by them as divine rules of faith and practice. They stood for monotheistic faith, had firm personality endowed with qualities, and they recognized evils and sins as positive facts, and held men to be accountable for their deeds or misdeeds on the judgment day.

H. Sharfuddin refers frequently, and not disapprovingly, to those whose utterances cost them their lives. Referring to Khwaja Junaid Baghdadi he says "The expressions which might lead to his execution did not emanate from him and he was the more acceptable leader of the people of the 'Path' than others. He was a man of 'Sahav' (Sobriety) as distinguished from 'Sukr' (Ecstasy condition). Although thousands and thousands of extra sensory things occurred to him he did not give expression to them. H.Junaid supported Hussain Mansur Hallaj because he thought that his utterance, 'Anal Haq', meant that he was a manifestation of the truth, but he is said to have signed the fatwa of his execution in 992 A.D. out of regard for the Shariat. He said 'Mansur and I are one and the same', but madness has saved me and reason has ruined him'. H.Sharfuddin considered Mansur as one of those who could not contain the truth that dawned upon people like him. He frequently quotes from the letters and the Tamhidat of Ain-ul-Quzzat-Hamadani, and says that his observations help one in solving many of the difficult problems. But one should discover and comprehend the expressions and the meanings in accordance with the rules and principles laid down by these people, otherwise it is not proper to speak out about certain of their expressions which apparently do not suit the rules of the faith. He was burnt to death for such expressions".²²

A much more interesting case for us is that of two bihari counterparts of Mansur, Hamadani and Abul Fatah-Suharwardi 'Maqtul' a leading light of the 'Ishraqin' or the illuministic Sufis, who was executed in 1181 A.D. Shaikh Aaz Kakavi and Ahmed Biohari, according to the saintly author of Manaqib-ul-Asfia, went from Bihar to Delhi and were

²² Islam, R Sufism in South Asia: Impact on 14th century Muslim society, OUP, Karachi, 2002, pg8.

condemned to death by the orders of Firuz Shah Tughlaq at the instance of the orthodox Ulema there for what was considered to be their strange unorthodox mystic utterances about God. The actual words are 'in diwana sifatan dar asrar sukhnan-i-farakh wa shattha dashtand dar alam-i-diwangi, khalq fahm-i-an na dashtand' (these inspired or infatuated madcaps, in their madness, talked wildly and spoke flashly or meretricious words about mysteries of the divine unity. People are devoid of the capacity to understand them). The Sultan refers in his 'Futuhāt' to "the chief of a sect who wore the garments of atheism and having thrown off all restraints led men astray. He dwelt in the city of his followers called him a God. One of his disciples affirmed that a God had appeared in Delhi, that is Amhad Bihari. When these facts were proved against them, I ordered them both to be confined and punished with chain". The Emperor does not refer to their execution (Elliot ii. 518)²³. It seems that the Sultan was misled by the official muslim clergy. We are told by Hazrat Shuiab, that when the great Saint of Bihar heard of this he felt pained and exclaimed that he would be surprised if a city where the blood of such 'Buzurgan' (sages) was shed remained populous and prosperous. The pious writer gives his own reactions by regretting that there was none among the assemblage of the Sufi saints and divines at Delhi who could secure the release of these two saintly but frenzied people by pleading their ecstatic condition. He ascribes the misfortunes of the sons and successors of Firuz Shah Tughlaq and the havoc wrought by the Mughuls in Delhi to their unjust execution.

The great saint of Bihar, in his numerous works especially his *Maktubat* and *Sharh-i-Adab-ul Muridin*, has written in great details and in a quite lucid language and with convincing arguments, about all the beliefs and conventions, ways and methods and practices of Sufism as also about the manners, morals, conduct and behaviour of the Sufi mystics. He warns us against adopting their ways and methods and following the path chalked out by them without fully comprehending their cardinal beliefs and principles, the true significance of their external and internal rules and conduct, meaning of the technical terminology they use, and an abundance of hypocrites who in the garb of 'Tawassuf' have drawn the veil across the condition and observation of the really authoritative Sufi mystics. In *Majlis* 4 on Friday 1st Ramzan, 775 or Feb 14, 1374, the question of the "Mushaikh or Dervishes of these

²³ Quoted in Askari, Op.Cit.P.43.

times” was raised and the saint said that the occupant of the Sajjada (carpet) must be aware of the significance of, and follow, the paths of Shariat (Observance of the canon law as well as the obligatory rules and duties of Islam) ‘Tariqat’ (Purification of the heart with the insight in the nature of) ‘Haqiqat’ (Realisation of truth or the ultimate reality), and one who was not in the know of their significance and did not tread all these paths was not a Sahib-i-Sajjada, but was a Satan unto himself, and his carpet was not a ‘Musalla’ but an idol and a brahmanical thread. Such men were seekers of position and traders in the faith. He warned the audience to beware of such ‘shopkeepers’ who were not ‘Rahbar’ (guide) but ‘Rahbur’ (highwaymen). The Sufi becomes the wearer of the green cloth and a shawl and a keeper of ‘Chilla’ but he may not become Musalman. He was eager to be called a Shaikh (holy man). Zahid (a man of austerity) and ‘Abid’ (servant or worshipper of God) but he did not try to attain the true and perfect faith”. This reminds us of what the 15th century Shutari poet of Bania, Basarh says in “Hazar Mekhi” or “Mush Dandani” garbs, and also of Maulana Rumi’s couplet, ‘Aye Basa Iblis Adam Ruway Hast-Pas ba Har Daste na Bayad Dad Dast’ (there are many satans in the garb of Adam. Hence you should not place your hands in those of everyone and follow him).

A Sufi, however high he might stand and whatever stage he might have reached, is never absolved of the behests and prohibitions of Shariat (Awamir-o-Nawahi). H.Sharfuddin denounces those who think that when the traveler reaches the stage of ‘Haqiqat’ and becomes an ‘Arif’ (Knower) he does not stand in need of the observation of the obligations of the Shariat’.

One of the characteristic methods of devotion of the Sufi mystic is ‘Dhikr’ or the concentrated and continual recitation of ‘La Illaha Illala Allaha’ (there is no God except God), i.e. the negation of all that is not God and affirmation of God’s existence. About the significance of the utterance and its two parts, Negation (Nafi) and Affirmation (ithbat) we are told that they are relative terms and they are attributes of humanity, he will not arrive at the world of unity”.²⁴ We read in letter no.40 of the Maktubat-i-Sadi. “In lexicon affirmation follows negation, but in the opinion of the jurists it precedes that; while, according to the knowers (Arifin), negation and affirmation are both ‘Shirk’, that is

²⁴ Sharif, M.M. A History of Muslim Philosophy, (Vol.1), Low Price Publications, New Delhi, Pg67.

abrogatory to the conception of absolute unity. In true affirmation or negation three things are essential (a) one who affirms, the being affirmed and the act of affirmation, one who negates and the thing which is negated. If one who calls these two acts of affirmation and negation different things he is a polytheist and an atheist, how can one who takes them to contain six distinct entities be like a sincere believer and a Unitarian? How shall one who has no existence negate God, and similarly, when you are yourself not you (i.e. do not exist), how can you affirm the existence of God. Shaikh Harvi has hinted at this in his verse: There is a plain (World) beyond 'Nafi' and 'Ithibat' which these people become enamored of. When the lover reaches there, he becomes non-existent, and there remains neither 'Nafi' nor 'Ithibat' nor is there any place.

Thus the Sufi saints of Bihar not only contributed to Persian literature but also to the society in general. They stood for social justice and were fully imbued with a sense of humanity. It was a part of their discipline to serve the needy and the oppressed ones and they were a medium of contact between the masses and rulers thus conserving the rich socio-cultural heritage of Bihar.

CHAPTER-3

REFLECTION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL CONDITION IN THE SUFI'S PERSIAN LITERATURE OF BIHAR

CHAPTER-3

REFLECTION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL CONDITION IN THE SUFİ'S PERSIAN LITERATURE OF BIHAR

Sufism was mainly built upon the tentacles of Islam; it is a religion of love and brotherhood, as it stands for unity of mind and soul and works towards realization of self. It is not surprising therefore, that Sufism became a religion of teaming millions and had special appeal to both Muslims as well as the Hindus, in South Asia. Sufism found an amicable geographical and cultural abode throughout the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent. Sufism and Sufi saints are an existing reality in socio-religious fold and have undoubtedly contributed immensely towards a healthy and amicable social order in India. Though its base was Islam, it followed the practice of humanism and therefore, became the religion of common people, because it appealed to their soul. Even for non-Muslims it presented a life of eternal freedom from the bondages of materialism to that of eternality and bliss.

This chapter will deal with the social and cultural scenario of Bihar as reflected in the writings of Sufis of Bihar.

With the establishment of the Muslim rule in India after the Ghorian conquest, we find many people migrating to India from the middle-east, central Asia and Khurasan. Those included variety of people- Sufi saints, scholars, artists and scores of others who in search of better prospect of life came to India and settled here finding it a very suitable place for their livelihood and also extremely suitable for their spiritual quest. The huge Muslim migration or company by Muslim ulemas as well as Muslim mystics of varied silsilas impacted Islam in India. Mysticism had already become part of Islamic spirituality and great number of followers had become associated with the mystic brand of Islamic spirituality. Sufism as it was known was very popular not only with the masses but Muslim elite (Umra-Susfa) and sometimes with the royalty.

Though not verified but it is claimed that the first Muslim saint was Khwaja Gharibnawaz who had already settled in India before the Ghorian conquest of Delhi and Ajmer. Along with him we find Sufi saints of repute one after another finding permanent home in India and having tremendous influence of Indian socio cultural aspects of society, some prominent Sufis being Baba Farid Gang-e- Shakar, Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia, Khwaja Naseeruddin Chiragdelhi, Alishah Qalandera, Bakhtiyar Kaki and scores of others.

As for the contribution of the Sufi movements of India, the concern it is almost and the established fact is that the Sufi saints of various shades had greatly contributed in the evolution of medieval composite society.

Islam was extremely new to the Indian masses and Islam was not easily finding the assimilation and some extra effort needed by the Sufi saints to work as a bridge between the faithful of great religions, Hindus and Muslims. The Sufi saints of medieval period had universal appeal for all the Sects, castes creed and people of different spirituality and doors were open for everyone. The chief message involved was humanity, brotherhood and service to humanity. So much so that the Sufi Khanqahs became centre of great attraction for all. The Khanqahs were flocked by poor, destitute, widows and orphans along with the nobles, elites and royalty alike. Thus we find that the message reached to the common message of love without any discrimination. We find great many references of Hindus becoming disciples of Muslim Sufi saints and also spreading harmony of living together.

The Sufis contribution in regard to the socio-cultural aspects is also to be explored in terms of the development of literature during the early medieval period. Sufis not only were spiritual men but also were great literary figures. They produced marvelous literature during medieval period and enriched the Persian, Arabic and Hindi literature during the whole of medieval period. As for the contribution in the development of Hindi literature is concerned we find that with the efforts of the Sufis almost new style of literature developed which had emerged with the mixture of Persian with local Indian dialects. The Khanqahs became a centre of such spoken language which was understood

by all and the Sufi saints like Baba Farid, Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia, Amir Khusrau, Abdul Quddus Gargohi and others greatly contributed in the development of such literature both in prose and poetry using Hindvi as dialect. We find a number of Dohas, Sakhois and other kinds of love poems which came to be known as Prem Akhyan literature being developed by the Sufi saints.

The literature which is a result of Sufi discourses also played a vital role in the development of literature of the medieval period. The literature in the form of Malfuzat, Maktubat and live biographies of Sufis apart from their poetics, provide us with a plethora of literatures. The famous Malfuzat of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia and others. Such literature is treasure of socio-cultural study of medieval period. The same literature is a reflection of social, political, economic and cultural aspect of 13th to 14th century of north Indian society. The Sufis had become very prominent during those days that they had to be taken seriously by the royalty also and sometimes the medieval rulers found it very difficult to tolerate the rising popularity of Sufi saints. Here we find the example of tussle between the Tughlaq sultans and the great Sufi saint Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia. Most of the Sufi saints felt it to be below their dignity to have any connection with royalty and also seek the auspices of them.¹

Thus we find that from the literature there is information about the existing political condition and the activities of the royalty from the literatures. The other aspects of life can also be found from the Sufi literature and we can reconstruct the history of past society taking help from the Sufi Malfuzat.

The contribution also can be enumerated from the fact that the Sufis are also lovers of music (Sama) the Sama became part of Sufi gathering at a time of the anniversary of the deadly saints. That led to the development of the musical styles and vocal traditions in which the writings of Sufi saints were sung and orally presented to the audience, Amir Khusrau, the great disciple of Nizamuddin Aulia inventing various ragas, khyals, and Shailies. He also wrote a number of Qawwalis and Ghazliat which consisted of love themes and transcending spirituality.

¹ Pandey, Sufism in East India, Pathway Publications, Lucknow, P.12.

Keeping in mind the above scenario of North India during 13th to 14th century, we can also study the same aspect in context of Bihar which during the time was under the control of Sultans of Bengal and sultans of Bengal used to desire the fate of Bihar. Same is the ease with the Sufis of Bihar who had become very popular among the masses during 14th century not through their writings or discourses. Their mystical gathering but also through their teachings of universal brotherhood, love and service to humanity. They had become very popular among the masses in Bihar also. The literature which they produced reflects all the above features and provides us with all kinds of information which deals with the social harmony, amalgamation of various castes and creeds along with helping the poor. Khanqahs were an excellent example of this intermixing of people who belonged to different faiths.

The contribution of prominent Sufis of Bihar, particularly the Firdausi Sufi saint Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri is unparalleled and he is greatly admired, loved and revered by the people of Bihar and Bengal during Sultanate period and continued to be respected and followed for centuries and even at present.

For hundreds of years before the British rule, there had seldom been major social disturbances and communal conflicts in Bihar, involving the two important religious groups, namely Hindus and Muslims. The reason was simple: a strong socio-economic interdependence. Production was organized primarily to meet the local needs. The role of market and money was limited mainly to facilitating the exchange of goods and services. There were very few needs for which people were dependent on the outside world. One of the goods brought from outside was salt. Even land rent was paid in produce, i.e., Bhowlee system of rent was in vogue. All members of the society, irrespective of their castes and religions, were dependent on one another. If there was any disturbance, the interests of all including the rulers were to be adversely affected.

Another fact to be noted is that the proportion of the descendants of the immigrants constituted a very tiny proportion of the total Muslim population in Bihar. The local converts were in overwhelming numbers. The conversion to Islam was due to a number of factors in which the role of force was seldom significant. In conversions, Sufi

saints played a major role. The influence of Sufism cut across the barriers of religions and castes. To cite just one example, in Mehshi town of East Champaran district, the Dargah of Halim Shah is revered by both Hindus and Muslims. This shrine predates the establishment of Muslim rule over the district. At the entrance is the Samadhi of Mahesh, the chief disciple of Halim Shah, who did not convert to Islam and, according to popular belief, as per the mandate of Halim Shah, people entering the Dargah have to offer floral tributes first to Mahesh. The town is named after him. Such shrines are scattered throughout Bihar in dozens. As is common knowledge, both the communities took part in each other's religious festivals with great devotion and enthusiasm.²

The social fabric of the state started weakening after the establishment of the British rule, which, in turn, began destroying the existing structure and organization of production. Market gradually became disembedded from the society and the production for market took strong roots after the introduction of commercial crops like poppy, indigo, sugarcane, jute, tobacco etc. and the mode of rent payment changed from Bhowlee to Nakadi. Handicrafts decayed or were destroyed. The introduction of the Permanent Settlement weakened the traditional socio-economic interdependence and the British government, after the revolt of 1857, which demonstrated the unity of both the communities against the foreign rule, began a conscious policy of sowing the seeds of discord between the two. Even then it took a long time for the British to achieve its goal. As late as 1917, during the Champaran Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi, it could not succeed in breaking the unity of the two communities. Among the prominent lieutenants of Gandhi were Pir Muhammad Moonis and Sheikh Gulab who refused to succumb to the pressures from the British.

There has been a problem of paucity of concrete data and documentary material with regard to socio-cultural condition of Bihar since time immemorial. The Persian chronicles of Muslim writers are also too scanty and insufficient to be helpful for reconstructing the picture of the past. The Persian chronicles were mainly concerned with matters of war and politics, interminable struggles, conquests and expanding power of the

² Identity and politics in Eastern India, Newsdesk, March 23, 2009.

world of Islam and not with peaceful penetration in India. After a brief discussion on the socio-cultural status of Bihar, let us now discuss the role of Islam in the context of Bihar.

Islam emerged as a religious and political phenomenon and had a tremendous success in the known world. However, not long after the death of Prophet Mohammad, it was torn into many sects and schisms, divisions and sub-divisions, which very soon exceeded the well-known and oft-repeated number 72-73, of the two major groups.³

The official Islam in India and Bihar has always been Sunnite Islam and of its four juristic schools, Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliji and Shafi'i, the first has always been recognized and acted upon. None of the chief Shiite sections, the Imamis or the twelvers, the Isma'ilis or the seveners, the Zaidia, who are nearest akin to the Sunnite, has been known to exist in Bihar in pre-mughul period. Bihari Muslims have a rich culture representing a syncretisation between Arab, Afghan and local Hindu Bihari traditions. Shab-e-Baraat and Mawlid-un-Nabi is widely celebrated by Bihari Muslims, and Ashura is mourned by all Bihari Muslims, especially Shias. The majority of Bihari Muslims follow the Barelwi movement of Sunni Islam. Shi'a follow the Akhbari school of Twelver Shi'ism.

Islam is a historic religion and also a social creed. It has had its own concept of society, particular type of social order, a certain outlook in life, and a religious ideology and above all its strong and rigid monotheistic belief in the unity of God, constitutes its philosophy. Then there was the egalitarian basis of social order, equality and brotherhood, and its teaching that every individual is born with a spiritual status and can claim social freedom as its birth right. we can get some idea about these matters expressive of kind feelings of humanity in Islam, such as love, charity, liberalism, disposition to think favorably of others, and to do them good, and some other socio-religious aspects and ideals, religious teachings, ways of living, thoughts and movements and cultured side of things, from the Mystic literature of the firdausia and Shattaria orders of Bihar in the Sultanat period. A critical study of such genre of Sufi literature as Tadhkira, smaller tracts and treatises dealing with principles and doctrines of the faith

³ Askari, S.H. Islam and Muslims in Medieval Bihar, Khuda Baksh Library, 1998, Pg.92.

and ritualistic practices, and above all Maktubat and Mulfuzat which mean letters addressed to distantly placed disciples and followers, and discourses delivered in the assembly of Majlis or Khanqah, will yield valuable source materials. One, however, should not expect to have a connected, well integrated systematic account.

The lives and writings of the early Sufis of Bihar show that whether they belonged to one or other of the chief orders, Chistiya, Suharwardia, Qadriya, Firdausia, Shuttaria, orthodox, Ba-Shara'(with law) and Beshara'(without law), they followed the Quran and the Sunnat (tradition), accepted all the cardinal principles of Islam, denounced all innovations and devotions in the sphere of dogma and practices and Bid'at (heresy), insisted upon the strict observance of obligatory duties of their faith, and discarded all that was obviously antagonistic to the fundamental teachings of Islam.⁴

The Bihar Sufis antagonized theologians and Mullahs who just followed just the to the spirit of faith and not the spirit of faith. They made a spiritual and mystic interpretation of the Quranic law and reconciled religion with philosophy, like Junaid Baghdadi, Ghazzali and others. They also made Islamic theology mystical and for them 'Everything is Him' (Hame Ust) was not far different from 'Everything is from him' (Hame az Ust).they put aside their own desires, the render themselves agreeable to all, irrespective of caste, creed status and position. It is the Sufis, not the Mullahs who proved to be the best missionaries of Islam. It is a fact that there were a large number of conversions under the spell of Sufism in Bihar and elsewhere, although it is seldom that one comes across some references in the mystic literature produced in Bihar to the role they strictly played in the process of Islamization.⁵

Some notable Sufis:

Many Sufi orders of good repute, the Chistiya, Suharwardia, Firdausia, Qadriya and Madariya, were represented in Bihar, and each one had contributed in the spread and development of Islam. Among the earliest to come were the Sufis of Chistiya order.some of the renowned name of this order being Shah Mahmud Bihari and Saiyad Taju-ddin of

⁴ Askari, Op.Cit, Pg.93.

⁵ ibid, Pg.94.

Danapur, the disciples of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Maulana 'Ali Bihari, a disciple of Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar, Makhdum Adam Sufi, son of Saiyid Ibrahim Chisti of what later became Hajipur, and his son Makhdum Hamidu'd Din and the latter's son Taimullah Sufaid Baz, the spiritual guide of Shaikh Faidullah of Kurgi near Patna, Shamsud' Din of Chanda's (Biharsharif). Taimullah Sufaid Baz had settled down in mahalla Chistiana of Biharsharif which was adjacent to mahalla Bhaisasur where lie buried a large number of Chisti saints, including Ahmad 'Isa Taj, the younger brother of the celebrated Chisti saint, Muhammad 'Isa Taj, a son-in-law of Saiyid Jalal Bukhari Makhdum Jahaniyan of Suharwardi order.

Some prominent Sufis of Suharwardi order were Shaikh Jalal Tabrizi, one of the chief disciples of the celebrated author of 'Awarifu'l-Ma'arif, Shihabu'd Din Suharwardi, came to Bihar via Delhi and Badaun and from there he went to Bengal and Sylhet where his Chilla Khana is still found. He has been mentioned by Makhdum Sharafud Din and his discourses. Maulana Ahmad Damishq, one of the Khalifas of the celebrated Bahaud' Din Zakariya Multani was the spiritual guide of Maulana Taqlu'd Din Suharwardi of Mahsun (Dinajpur, Bengal) the author of Multaqit which is an abridged version of Ghazza's Ihyau'l 'ULum, Taqlu'd Din was the inspirer of many Suharwardi saints of Bihar, including Makhdum Yahya Maneri, the father of the celebrated Firdausi saint, Makhdum Sharfuddin Maneri.

There had been many versions of Maneri's traditional chronology of his birth, death of his father and his visit to Delhi in search of a spiritual guide. According to Askari,⁶ it was certain that at Delhi, he met the great Chisti saint Nizamu'd Din Auliya and Sharfuddin of Panipat before their death in A.H. 724 OR 725, but finding no spiritual guide solace from them he betook himself to the eminent Sufi Shaikh Najibu'd Din Firdausi, who invested him with discipline ship and spiritual successorship shortly before his death in 1332. the duration of his stay in Delhi, his wanderings in the jungles of Behea (Shahabad area) and the hills of Rajgir, his ascetic practices in the cave of Kund, the period of his movement to and from Bihar town, as also the time of the issuance of the Farman of Muhammad Biun Tughlaq, offering him a Bulgarian praying carpet and a

⁶ Ibid, Pg.98.

land grant, for the upkeep of the newly built Khanqah for him and its return are also disputed points.

Sheikh Sharfuddin was liberal and broad-minded in his approach towards the non-muslims. In his discourses and letters he quotes with approval from the great mystic 'Ainu'l Quddat Hamasdani who had profound admiration for the founders of all religions who formed their views on the basis of religious experiences. Their followers failed to grasp the real significance of the original teachings and turned their meanings. When asked about the yogi who said that one who wished to live should know how to die, the Shaikh said that they did say so but did not believe in true significance. Ignorant transmitters missed the deep religious spirit behind such statements. Referring to Islam, the Shaikh said that it came in all perfection, but its commands were not observed and there had been deviation from its original ideology. People blindly followed the faith of their ancestors and had become conventional in their belief and practices. Practical religion is different from its metaphysical and doctrinal aspects. He also had unstinted admiration for the supreme expression of love for Hindus, convinced through self-immolation which he had witnessed on several occasions in Raigir. He tells us of a man who had killed himself when a stone image he had in his left hand fell down. He had been standing on one leg, and his nails had grown so long as to be entwined around his hand. It is love which inspired his action. There are references to widowed women who had abandoned the world and took recourse to self-immolation by setting fire to their clothes soaked in naphtha oil. Such emotional ascetic practices evoked keen appreciation but not commendation from the saint of Maner. Genuine asceticism, according to the saint, results in great liberty and the purification of the soul, and this liberty can be acquired either by a believer or an infidel.

Sufis relationship with the Kings and Nobles:

The Firdausi saints were indifferent towards politics and shunned all connections with royalty and men of noble rank and position. However the Suharwardia and Shuttaria Sufis did not abstain from all kinds of associations with Kings and Nobles and felt no scruples in accepting not only such ecclesiastical jobs as those of the almoner but even

Jagirs and favours which they used for the benefit of the people. They held that high position does not do harm to those who know its antidote. The well-known Suharwardia saint, Saiyid Jalal Bukhari was held in high esteem not only by the greatest saint of Bihar but also by emperor Firuz Tughlaq, and his capable wazir, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul. Powerful governors like Ainul Mulk and displaced rulers of Sindh, like Jam Khairuddin Jam and Jan Babinia sought his intercession. He used to come very often to Delhi and his recommendations for favours for the poor and the needy was always accepted by the king.

Maneri's Makhtubat contains letters written in reply to emperors such as Muhammad Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq, princes such as Dawar Malik, governors such as Mufarrihul Mulk and Hesamud Din and officials and nobles too numerous to mention. The learned Maulana Muzafar Shams Balkhi who had given up his job in Firuz Sha's Arabic college, situated in Kushak-i-Lal at Delhi to become the disciple of the great saint of Bihar, was as puritanical in his outlook as to shun all worldly things and give away in charity even his books. He tied his Izar or close fitted trouser with a 'munj' string and gave up even his wife, divorcing her and himself arranging her marriage with another, lest his growing affection towards her should affect his devotion to God. Yet, he was also on terms of correspondence with Sultan Ghyasuddin of Bengal. Ten of his letters, addressed to Sultan, relating mostly on religious matters are found in a voluminous work left by him. Thus, these saints had no aversion towards rulers and men in power and recognized the utility of their high offices and position. Yet, they would never bow before them, nor would accept anything from their hands. According to the letters of Maneri written to Muhammad Dawar Malik(son-in-law) of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, he would recommend genuine cases of poverty and piety for favour and help. But he would have nothing for himself and in his admonitions to kings and officials he was quite frank and did not mince matters.⁷

According to Munisu'l Qulab, when emperor Muhammad Bin Tughlaq learnt that on the entreaties of his followers the great saint of Bihar had condescended to descend from the Rajgir hills and traveled on foot every week to Biharsharif, he sent a Bulgarian

⁷ Muhammad, Y.T. Sufi movement in Eastern India, Anmol publication, Delhi, Pg.68.

prayer carpet as a present and ordered Zainu'd Din Majdu'l Mulk, the governor of Bihar to bestow something from Rajgir as a jagir for the upkeep of the Khanqah which had to be built for the saint of Biharsharif. The saint would not accept Jagir and he preferred to deliver his sermons by sitting under the "Do Chapra" Nizamu'd Din Maula had set up for his weekly sermons out of his legitimately earned money or Mal-i-muzakka. He had however to relent on the personal entreaties of the governor who told him what he was likely to expect from the despotic Sultan if his orders were not carried out. It is not a fact, as stated in Munisu'l Qulub, that he had to undertake the strenuous journey to Delhi, where he arrived after the death of the Sultan and the deed of the Jagir was returned to his successor, Firuz Shah Tughlaq. It was only once that he went to Delhi, and the Jagir was returned fifteen years later to Firuz Shah when he, on his way to Bengal in A.H.754, stopped in Bihar and paid a visit to the great saint. This valuable information is found in The Maktubat of Hasan Mu'iz Balkhi, and we can infer the date of establishment of the Khanqah (754) from it⁸.

Social life in Sufi literature:

The Sufi literature available throws some light on the relations between the Sufis, on the one hand, and the court, the different Muslim social groups, ascetics and non-muslims and also lower classes of people that surrounded them. The social constitution of the Muslims recognized two broad divisions, Ahl-i-Saif (men of the sword) and Ahl-i-Qalam (men of pen). Besides the rulers and members of the military aristocracy, such as amirs, maliks, sipahsalar, maqta, imams, qadi, khatibs, muhtasib, ulama and masaikh, who were in charge of the ecclesiastical and judicial functions and looked after the moral and religious as well as educational needs of the people. The oft-quoted Arabic expression, La Rahbaniata fi'l Islam means that there is no priesthood in Islam and the Muslim society was theoretically casteless, but the democratic fraternity could not escape the contagion of social distinctions in its Indian environment.

The Saiyyids who claimed descent from the Prophet of Islam, and the saints called Shaikh, Pir, Makhdum etc. were so highly esteemed and even venerated that a

⁸ Askari, S.H. Islam and Bihar, Op.Cit. Pg.114.

critical muslim writer had described them as 'the Brahmans of Islam'. The respect paid to them is evident from the way in which they have been frequently referred to in the Malfuzat.

There was another element, the commonality of Muslim society, consisting of various classes of people such as artisans, craftsmen, petty-traders, clerks, domestic servants and slaves and a large section of the converted Muslims.

In Sufistic literature it is rare that we come across people such as chakars, nafar (servants, attendants), parah doz (tailors) and na'lain doz (shoemakers,etc). In his commentary on Abab, Makhdum Sirajuddin refers, besides Kushawaran,(agriculturist) and Ahl-i-Hirfa (artisans) to many type of workers such as carpenters, workers in leather, carriers of burden, tailors, sack makers, fullers, bootmakers, spindle makers, blacksmiths, barbers etc. These earned bread by lawful means and had catered to the needs of mankind since olden times. The saint condemned beggary and advocated kasb(earning), or the conception of vocation or calling, that is doing manfully the work to earn bread for himself and his family and not to accumulate wealth. Kasb or labour for earning bare necessities of life was substituted for the old ascetic ideal of renunciation of the world. Kasb was an indispensable precept (fardiat), but with conditional conjunction of necessity. There should be no hoarding and the means must be lawful.

As practical people, the Sufis dealt realistically and sensible with every-day works and activities of the labourers, poor women and pious persons earning their bread by hard work, and also honest men urged by the prompting of sex. The Kanizgan (slave-girls) who had to soil their hands and feet with dirt and mud when they thronged round the wells to draw water could not be expected to complete purificatory wash before sitting down to cook and eat their food. Workers in the field and labourers who came barefooted were allowed by the Prophet to enter and offer their prayers in the mosque. Impurity did not lie in the dust trodden by the feet, or fatwa or religious decree about such dirt and nastiness would be oppressive to many people. Maulana Muzzaffar was very glad to know that his disciple in Bengal, Khwaja Hamia⁹ had at least performed Nikah which

⁹ Maktubat-i-Muzafar Shams Balkhi.,Khudabaksh Library,Patna.

was a divine command. He had advised a disciple to purchase a slave-girl (jaria) as to avoid sins.

The Sufis often quoted the two dicta of the Prophet; “Give to men what were rights”, and “place men in their proper ranks”, and Makhdum Sharfuddin cited an instance of different ways in which Ayesha, the Prophet’s wife, received a simple believer and a muhtasham¹⁰ (grandee) and he said that, “some rose to be rulers, some wazirs and high official, khan, Maliks, “Alim, yet the people of lower orders had also their role to play what would happen if this city becomes denuded of naddafs (cotton dressers). This shows unawareness about the importance of the artisan class. The Sufis thought that the relation between members and society was with reference to the sphere of action and it was one of social existence.

Sufism had provided many opportunities for women to give themselves up to a life of devotion and some had attained a state of conscious spirituality, perhaps far ahead of male members. But it was not permissible for them to assume the position of a religious guide or Pir, and initiate a neophyte by the usual method of giving or placing hand on hand (dast bar dast) in compact, cutting a few hairs of his head with scissors, giving a khirqa, a taquia and a shaira. In this connection, a letter of the 15th century saint Abdul Quddus Gangohi addressed to a pious talented afghan lady, Bubu Khatun¹¹ found in his Maktubat forms interesting reading.

One Makhdum Sharfuddin observed that the things which are prescribed in law include what is done as a habit for love of wife and children. But he warns that some women were rahbar (guide) while others were rahbur (highway robber), the former encouraging and helping their husbands to pursue the path of truth, devotion and submission, and the latter intercepting the road to truth and leading the husbands astray from the right way. There might be Khula in the case of the latter, setting them free or resigning the marriage settlement, as was Talaq, permissible for men.

¹⁰ Tuhfa-i-Ghaibi, Quoted in Askari, Pg.112.

¹¹ Maktubat-i-Quddusiya, Discourses of Makhdum Maneri, Khudabaksh Library, Patna.

The Sufis were quite conscious of the socio-moral aspects of the situations which without any effort and necessary activities on their part might bring many into the fold of Islam. Sufism which was a Semitic interpretation of mysticism to the Aryan mind found favour with the Indian Aryans. There was no question of any element of compulsion pressure or even of persuasion. Conversion of non-muslims was no part of their mission and they spoke seldom about it, and yet Sufi saints were largely responsible for the peaceful penetration of Islam in India. The desire to escape from the social oppressions or to raise themselves to a higher social, moral or cultural level or conditions had undoubtedly drawn many of the down-trodden Indians to Islam. There were fewer cases of men of higher strata, specially the intellectual classes accepting the simple faith of their alien rulers. We however learn from Mulfuzat that an eighty year old Hindu came to the Khanqah and voluntarily embraced Islam. Another yogi of handsome appearance felt so inspired on seeing the Maneri saint that he called him Rup Kartar, and afterwards he became Muslim. Yet another entered into an argument with the saint and used some harsh words and turned back. The saint gave him a patient hearing and assured the audience that he would come and become a Muslim. The tombs of the two yogis near the saint's tomb are pointed out to this day.

Sufis and social service:

The Sufis especially of the Firdausia order, were large hearted and gentle in their views and very liberal in their attitudes, of sympathy and understanding. There are many references to their written recommendations for help to the poor and deserving people to the kings and nobles. They would not accept jobs and jagirs from the high and the mighty, but would go out of the way to help the poor and never ignored them. It would suffice to refer to the letter which the Makhdum wrote to Firuz shah tughlaq and to Malik Mufarrih and to the many letters of the Makhdum Balkhi successor, Muzzafar Shams Balkhi, calling the attention of the officials and nobles of Bengal to the plight of Darwesh like businessmen fallen on evil days who would never open their lips before others. In the Khwani-i-pur Ni'mat¹² we find the Makhdum saying, "when I was in my old cell (apparently Rajgir) the ruler of the place was a Malik, and the poor and indigent of the

¹² Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat Quoted in Askari, Pg.112

region pestered me so much that I began to feel tired of writing papers of recommendations. He was however reminded by a Shaikhzada of Chisti of his great ancestor, Khwaja Maudud Chisti, who despite repeated repulsions and humiliations continued to approach even personally the ruler of the area for redressal of grievances and rendering help to needy ones. The Ganj-i-la-Yakhfa¹³ of Husain Mui'z Balkhi records that among those who attended the 18th majlis there were Malik Badh Kotwal and Saiyid Saiyidu's Sadat, the Katib (official, secretary). Addressing them, the Balkhi saint that a hindu had come and complained that the authorities of the Diwani were demanding from him rusum (custom duties or taxes) which he had not been called upon to pay at any time. He asked them to give him relief and protection, and exempt him from new demands. He observed that infidelity and faith, orthodoxy and heresy, were technical terms and should not be stretched to apply to men of religions, sects and schisms and did not come against care and consideration. There is no real enmity in anything and against anybody. Profane or superficial enmity was largely occasioned by selfish desires and interests. He cited the traditions about Prophet Moses who was warned up by God for not responding to the call for help from a repentant Pharaoh when he was in a drowning stage and about Prophet Abraham for denying shelter to a creature of God on the ground of being non-believer.

Influence of Indian culture:

Some practices and customs of life essentially Indian and Hindu had crept into Muslim culture due to long and close proximity and neighborliness of residence with the Hindus. Adverse questions and protests raised by the purists and Zealots it was said that Muslim women were silenced. It was said that Muslim women imitating the Hindu put vermillion on their heads, to which the Makhdum replied that there could be no objection if they did so to beautify their person and please their husbands. There were many things, food and garment, water and oil, etc. which all of us shared.¹⁴ The question of Tashabbah (similitude) came only when something was done as obligation of faith and was opposed to the fundamentals of Islam. When asked about the great Saturnalia of Holi, the saint

¹³ Ganj-i-La-Yakhfa, Khudabaksh Libarray, Patna.

¹⁴ Ganj-i La Yajna, Chapter1; 28, Quoted in Askari, Op.Cit, Islam and Muslims, Pg.116.

said that it was treated by the Hindus as a religious obligation and if so avoided by muslims.¹⁵

There were a lot of Hindu cultural influences too on the life of the muslims. The Makhdum spoke of his great teacher as Maulana Kaka. Once he ran towards his mother on seeing smoke coming out of his house and reminded her of the established convention of not lighting fire for food but once during night. We find references in the Malfuzat to such sobriquets as Khwaja Gangu, Khwaja Mamman Multani, Shaikh Langoti, also called Fakhru'd Din Diwana Shaikh Laddu, Shaikh ghulati, Malik Nathan, Raja Kalwani, etc. there were also men of lower order such as Chajju Gawa'I and Jojan Khwush Khwan (one who read and sang sweetly)¹⁶.

Men believed that burning of the crust of onions and garlic in the house, and sitting near the doorways caused penury, and use of common and broken combs and common towels led to poverty and separation. The firdausia and the Shuttariya saints gave amulets (Ta'widh) asking protection from deity.

Even in their dress and diet the Sufis of Bihar were very simple and sobre.. the most common clothes worn by them consisted of Rida, (cloak or mantle), Qamis (shirt of cotton), Jubba(a loose, wide-sleeved outer vestment, Qaba (a tight fitted coat with buttons), Pairahan (a loose vest or shirt) Mirza's (an under-jacket with big sleeves and open cuff) Tahbund (strip of cloth worn around the waist and passing between the legs), Izar (trousers covering the body to the middle of leg and even below that) Dotaht (a double folded garment having two thickness of layers), Baraint (a cloak which kept out the rain water), Do-patta, Dastar, 'Amama (big turban of folded sheets) and Taqia (fillet, specially worn under head dress) have also been mentioned. The Sufis said that silken clothes were forbidden to men.¹⁷

Local languages were assimilated in the writings of these sufi saints. The simple words like bhang, bhat, khatt, khirki, khaddi, dol, badhna, hal, dhakka, etc and more than

¹⁵ Munisu'l-Muridin. Chp 2:12, Khudabaksh Library, Patna.

¹⁶ Askari, Op.Cit, Pg.116.

¹⁷ Tuhfa-i-Ghaibi, Mukhkhu'l Maani, Ganj-i- la Takhfa.

half a dozen dohras (couplets) in the Makhtubat of Muzafar Shams Balkhi¹⁸ of which one, when recited by a wandering faqir, playing on his one stringed ektara,

“ekat kandi bedha bahutar bharke ga’in

chinta heen man ichcha maran tetahi nahin”

moved the saint Makhdum almost to tears and the other one ran thus,

“sagar kuwe patal pani lakhan boond Bikaye

bajar paro the mathura nagari kanha piyase jaye”

There are more intelligible, almost good specimens of Khari boli¹⁹.

The Malfuzat gives a detailed account of a life of a Muslim from his birth to death. The Sufis attitude in regard to some practices which had arisen without any express sanction appeared to be what might be avoided but should not be interfered with as a large number of people had become customed to the same, and there was no Nass or manifest prohibitory text. Such were the practices of Bang-i-Adhan, delivered to the ear of a new born child, lifting of two fingers, kissing them and placing on the two eyes on hearing the name of Prophet Mohammad in the Adhan:ceremonial naming or clothing of the child on a particular day, using lime to flavour the betel-leaves made out of crushed oyster shells²⁰ which had once caused a row at sonargaon, each one present at a burial, throwing a clot of earth inside the grave and rose water on the shroud and flower of the tomb, the siyum ceremony on the third day of death, observing a fast called roza-i-mariam²¹ on the 15th rajab and on Ashara or 10th muharram, applying on the latter day collyrium on the eye and cooking haft dana (now called santa-nja) out of seven cereals, in commemoration of what had happened with the survivors of Imam Husain’s family at Karbala, fixing of 20,000²² as dower for the bride, assemblage of a large number of men and women and excessive ceremonies ‘carried to a high pitch’ on the occasion of marriage.

¹⁸ Letter No.121,172 and 173 of Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, Khudabaksh Library, Patna..

¹⁹ Quoted in Askari, Op.Cit. Islam . Pg.15

²⁰ Khwan-i-pur Ni’mat, Of Makhdum Maneri, Khudabaksh Library, Patna.Pg.13

²¹ Khwan-i-Pur Ni’maat, Ibid, Pg16.

²² Ibid,Pg14.

There are also references showing that the prevailing atmosphere was charged with lying, cheating, deceitful evasion of obligatory duties, and was tintured with corruption, superstitions and beliefs in charms and omens, witch-craft and trivialities. People took vows to do this or that if they got what they wanted in the shape of relief or aid, but when their purpose was served they backed out from their solemn promises. Some had devised clever methods of escaping from the obligatory payment of Dhakat (portions of Muslim property given in charity). They took recourse to Hila-i-Shara't (legal fineness) which became hila-i-Haram (forbidden fraud). They put the amount of Dhakat in a tray and covered the silver with the quantity of grain and offered it to an indigent person. When the latter was about to return the tray for a few dirhums (silver coins) and in this way they got back what they seemed to have given away. Another ingenious way centered in what was technically called Haulan-I Haul (passing away or turning round of one whole year). In the eleventh month, before the needed expiry of full year, they sold their goods and property which was liable to the levy of Dhakat to their wives and this gave them the plea that they had nothing to pay Dhakat for. Sometimes after they made a show of purchasing the same from their wives. The saint condemned such trickeries.

The Makhdum of Bihar was very critical of many Qazi's and muftis who were charged of dereliction of duty and misuse of power. He and his scholarly Balkhi successor in their letters to intellectuals such as Maulvi Hamid and Sadru'din, expressed their disapproval on accepting such office. They also believed that burning of the crust of onions and garlic in the house, sitting near the doorways caused penury and use of common and broken combs and common towels led to poverty and separation. The Firdausia and Shuttariya saints gave amulets (Taw'idh) asking for protection from the diety.

Sama (mystic songs)

The Suharwardias, Firdausias and the Chistiyas allowed music under certain conditions of zaman, makan akhwan (time, place and people present), but they were more restrained and did not fall victims to the charms of Indian music as was the case of the

latter. As for the Shattariyas, they had no fondness at all for the sama being immersed as they were in their own peculiar all-absorbing dhikr and ashghal. There were frequent assemblies and ecstatic conditions occasioned by mystic songs sung in the audition parties called sama but never could anyone of the saintly personages in Bihar' rotate on his legs' so as to be dubbed' "Pir-i-Raqqas, like those of the chistiyas."²³

In Ganj-la Yakhfa, we get a description of Sama as it was practiced in Bihat Khanqah. First, there was a recital of the Quran. There were Qaria (readers of the Quran) and Khwshkhwans (sweet-voiced minstrels called Qawwal or Goindagan). First an Ashari (ten verses, of the Quran were read, and then the tutrib (singer) sang some verses of a ghazal in Persian, which were sometimes tuned to an instrument. The Makhdum was often seen moved to tears, absorbed and overwhelmed. When he regained his form he uttered twice Astagh firullah (God, forgive me) and renewed his Wuda (ablution). He did this all for losing control over himself came or was brought by somebody, the audience were permitted to have the sama, for it was forbidden only to men of evil passions and not good men. Once there was a Sama on the conclusion whereof the Makhdum, addressing the audience, quoted some verses "I bring to your ears two things from the tongues of sama. Sama is a matter of moment for you, and you are an instant to it." Once when the mystic minstrel, in a garden outside the Khanqah switched on from Persian verses to Hindawi, and the audience were carried to the highest pitch of raptures, the Makhdum said that Hindawi jakari or chakri songs are usually sung by women and they were very soft and lust exciting which might have caused mischief for young men had crept in the assembly, and they are incapable of understanding or appreciating the true purpose and spiritual import of mystic songs.²⁴

Men believed that burning of the crust of onions and garlic in the house, and sitting near the doorways caused penury, and use of common and broken combs and common towels led to poverty and separation. The firdausia and he Shuttariya saints gave amulets (Ta'widh) asking protection from deity.

²³ Maktubat-i-Quddusiya., Quoted in Askari, Op Cit, Islam, Pg.120.

²⁴ Makhtubat-i-Quddusiya.

Even in their dress and diet the Sufis of Bihar were very simple and sobre.. the most common clothes wore by them consisted of Rida, (cloak or mantle), Qamis (shirt of cotton), Jubba(a loose, wide-sleeved outer vestment, Qaba (a tight fitted coat with buttons), Pairahan (a loose vest or shirt) Mirza's (an under-jacket with big sleeves and open cuff) Tahbund (strip of cloth worn around the waist and passing between the legs), Izar (trousers covering the body to the middle of leg and even below that) Dotaht (a double folded garment having two thickness of layers), Baraint (a cloak which kept out the rain water), Do-patta, Dastar, 'Amama (big turban of folded sheets) and Taqia (fillet, specially worn under head dress) have also been mentioned. The Sufis said that silken clothes were forbidden to men.²⁵

Education

There are traditions or Ahadith ascribing many things to the Prophet of Islam, both in the form of his sayings and actions, inculcating the need, in fact the obligation, to acquire knowledge even by undertaking long and distant travels for the development of critical spirit and formation of character, and for acting and thinking in upright ways. One of the traditions, whether authentic or apocryphal, says that a father can confer upon his child no more valuable gift than good education. On the other side, much is said about the lofty ideals and higher aims and purposes of the system of educations prevalent in India since the time of the Guptas and even earlier in the Buddhist and the brahmanical periods. The renowned scholars occupied an important position in social life because of their selfless character, deep knowledge, and wonderful feats of memory. The muslims also refer not only to the educational institutions for higher learning that had sprung up in various places of Islamic lands outside India and were source of inspiration and served as models of colleges and schools founded and patronized by muslim sovereigns who ruled over India at various times and were eager to do something for their faith, and for the benefit of their souls rather than for public good. There were rules prescribing duties of and relationship between parents and pupils, teachers and taught. The three R's, Reading and writing and instruction in simple arithmetic were regarded as the basic elementary studies and the foundations of education. The first task of the conquerors after gaining a

²⁵ Tuhfa-i-Ghaibi, Mukhkhu'l Maani, Ganj-i- la Takhfa.. Khuda Baksh Library, Patna.

strong foothold was to raise masjids at different places, most of which had a maqtab or a madrasas attached to them to provide instruction in the three R's, as well as higher education through their own mother tongue, Arabic, Turki or Persian. It was at these institutions that young Muslims received elementary and higher education as well as military training. Education in higher stages was characterized by grammatical exercises, letter-writing, poetic and rhetorical compositions, oratorical practices, debates, discussions and disputations. Baktiyar Khalji is said to have established maqtabs and madrasas in different parts of Bihar and particularly at Biharsharif, his chief center of military operations. Significantly enough, however nobody either amongst the Hindus or Muslims, realized the need of a handbook and much less of a comprehensive treatise on education in all its aspects, character and tendencies, extent and institutions, subject matters in elementary and higher stages etc.

In course of time, there grew up many educational institutions. Among the renowned madrasas located in Bihar during the Turco-Afghan period mention may be made of the following: the madrasas of Makhdum Sharfudin Maneri, Ahmad Chirmposh, Sheikh Abdur Nabi and Qazi Abdus Shekur at Maner Sherif, Yahiya and Chirmposh were noted for their erudition in poetry and theology and commanded the respect not only of scholars of neighbouring countries but also of Firuz Tughlaq, the Turco Afghan of Delhi, who was a lover of learning. The madrasa of Qazi Ziallah at Mohalla Mirdar, Biharsharif, of Shamsul Huq, alias Buddha Haqqani, at Bazidpur near Barh in Patna district, those of Mulla Mansoor Danishmand and of Mulla Abdus Sami at Rajgir, that of Amir Ataullah Zainabi at Phulwarisharif and the madrasas of Mulla Shafi and Mulla Afaq at Amuthu have been notably mentioned.

Bihar derived its name from Vihara which was a centre or seat of learning where a number of famous scholars imparted knowledge in various branches to earnest students of Hinayana Buddhism. There were considerable educational activities in the traditional Hindu and Muslim systems of learning in such centres as Maner, Biharsharif, Gaya, Mithila and Tirhut. The various Sufi Khanqahs both in the south and north Bihar fostered the cause of education. A Muslim child learned at home and in Maktaba reading, reciting and memorizing the Quran, learning the rules of grammar and speech, some ethical or

moral maxims, a few traditions and lives of saints. Those who entered the madrassa attached to or situated near the mosques, carried on their higher studies. In early times people, hindu or muslims thought it wrong to take pay for teaching.

The school system of the muslims prevalent during the period 1206 to 1526 and even later, required that every child after learning his alphabets and vocabulary, should read the Holy Quran under a Muqri- one who knows how to read it. Next, the student had to read literature, romance, history and ethics. He made himself conversant with such works as Pandnamah, Amudnamah, Gulistan, Bostan, Jamiul Qawanin, Ruqqat Amanullah Hussaini, Bahardanesh-Sikandarnamah and so on. Those who stopped at this stage were given the title of munshi. But others who continued at this stage were given the title of munshi. But others who continued further were called as Maulvi, Maulana or Fazil, befitting the standard and nature of learning that they had acquired. Those who studied Arabic to read, in addition, works on the life and teaching of the Prophet Mohammad and commentaries on The Quran, Aqaid, Tasawwuf, Logic, Philosophy and Ilm-e- Kalam. students were given free education and were supplied with food, clothing and books by zealous patrons of learning. Every man of means supported at least one student. The work entitled Sirat-i-Firuzshahi, composed in the 14th century, provides among other things a catalogue of worldly advice supposed to have been given by Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq to his officials concerning the line of action that the official should pursue in private life. One piece of advice is, 'all should secure knowledge and learning for themselves and should not neglect to educate their fellow muslims. The knowledge that is acquired must not be forgotten but brushed up by constant discussion. Learning should be imparted to the deserving only'. Thus, guided by the prevailing idea of the time, the lawyers, judges and even administrative officers and physicians welcomed earnest students and gave them instruction suited to their aptitude. Even during the reign of the Turkish slave Balban, high officials like Mustaufiul Mamalik and Shamsul Malik spared no pains to render all help to seekers of knowledge. All those occupying high stations in life spent their spare time in teaching, and when they had finished reading a book, could not rest contented till they had explained the subject matter to others who had not read it. There was besides, no dearth of persons who could collect rare and

valuable manuscripts and give them free to students or would engage calligraphists to transcribe manuscripts and when, the transcription work was completed, to place it at the disposal of scholars. In addition to private accommodation provided for students by the rich, the government ran boarding houses. Here the meals supplied were satisfactory and at times, rather rich.

In the madrasas individual care was taken. Sometimes the boy at the top, known as Moid, explained his own ideas to his classmates, this was followed by further discussion, with the teacher rounding off the debate by making his observations. This method of training was generally called Edu.

The system of examination was simple. At the time of test discussions, candidates who showed their worth were declared successful. The fortunate candidate had then to appear before an assembly of Ulemas and go through a ceremony called 'Rasm-i-dastarbandi', which was something like convocation. The main item of the function was to fasten a turban on the head of the successful candidate, who was thus raised to the rank of an ulema or a Sheikh.

During the time of Turko-Afghan period, the study of the sciences was not neglected. Learning, in the fourteenth century and later, consisted of acquiring knowledge in theology, politics, astronomy, astrology, physiology, medicine, zoology and veterinary science. The study of different branches of science not only affected the people of Delhi and the neighboring lands but also influenced the people of Bihar, which formed a component part of the Turko-Afghan Empire. There is however no material at our disposal to prove how far Bihar made practical use of science it specialized in.

As education, like practically all other departments of life amongst the Hindus, had been closely associated with religion and muslim education also in early Hindu age had been largely in the hands of theologians, jurists and mystic Sufis of different religious orders, there is no better way of forming a correct picture, and getting an intensive idea of intellectual life and educational system, both in the elementary primary and higher secondary stages of the character and content of curriculum, the factors and

forces at work in the development of education, and the important role played by the existing system in the social set up of the age, than to collect and shift the scanty and scattered materials as are still available in the works of authorities who were only indirectly concerned with education as a separate discipline. Such works are historical, biographical, literary and more specifically religious and hagiological. The facts collected should be placed in due relation to the developments of thought and culture, learning and education. The few literary glimpses of social and religious life and of education in its social bearing that we can catch from the works of mystic Sufis called Malfuzat and Maktubat and of Smriti writers and also the prose works and versified effusions of some contemporary poets show that education was thought then, as in ancient times, as a panacea for all evils and as means of improving the moral and physical conditions for a fairly considerable section of population who formed the basis of the social pyramid. Education must have been widely diffused in the early middle age than is commonly supposed. The sultanate period was neither more nor less provided with elementary schools and institutions for higher instruction than any period.

The contribution of Sufi preachers of Bihar to the evolution of a common mixed language, Khariboli or Hindustani is worth noting. We get genuine specimens and authentic evidences of linguistic assimilation in the writings and utterances of the Sufi saints recorded by their immediate disciples. Not to speak of Hindustani terms such as Khat (bedstead), Bhat (boiled rice), langoti (a narrow slip to cover the private parts), and numerous Indian names such as Chajju Gawai, Bibi Pujari, Bhikan Piyara, Lad Safi, Jojan, Sheikh Chulhai, Maulana Nathan, Shaikh Badh Nur, we get full sentences spontaneously spoken, and Hindi doharas quoted or composed by early muslim saints of Bihar.

In Bihar these Sufi saints set in motion a process of cultural and linguistic fusion who moved from the western parts to these regions where they preached to the people. When they came to Bihar they began mixing the local idiom in their use of Hindi both in speech and writing. The mingling of Turkish, Arabic and Persian words in their vocabulary was a natural phenomenon arising out of their cultural background. This trend in the development of Hindi through linguistic blendings and cohesion is to be seen in the

works of Sufi saints of Bihar, written in Persian in the form of letters (Malfuzat) and discourses and utterances (Maktubat) in which Hindi verses and sayings and illustrative statements in prose have also been quoted.²⁶

Thus, Sufism and Sufistic literature had a lot of positive influence in the Socio-cultural development of Bihar. They preferred a mystic and spiritual interpretation of the Quranic law to its mere literal sense. They considered service to God's creatures and fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities towards their fellow beings as essential for their discipline. They put aside their own desires to render themselves agreeable to all, irrespective of caste and creed and they were free from all complexes and shackles of colour and race. In this context the contribution made by Makhdum Maneri is unparalleled.

²⁶ Diwakar, R.R. Bihar through Ages, Kashi Prasad Research Institute, Patna, pg.28.

CHAPTER 4

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SUFI PERSIAN LITERATURE OF BIHAR

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Bihar as a state has contributed immensely to the development of Persian language and literature. These contributions are available in both forms of literature- prose and poetry. In the seventh century when Muslims established the rule over Bihar, the effects of Persian language and literature started to grow and get prominence in his region. The first traces of Persian poetry also date back to the same period.

This chapter focuses on the Sufis mystic literature, the distinctive characteristics of Sufism and works and teachings of the Bihar Sufi saints. The chapter had been divided into two sections, Poetry and prose. A small section of bilingual poets has also been included in poetry section.

A critical review of Persian literature of Bihar reflects that there was a continued growth and development of Persian prose and poetry in Bihar starting from the time of Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri (782H|1380 A.D.) till the period of Shaad Azim Abadi (1927). Apart from poetry we also come across contributions in the area of Tajkare Nigari, muslim rulers not only conquered various parts in India with the help of sword and might, but also brought with them a number of learned men and a caravan of religious scholars. These scholars and religious preachers propagated Islam and its humanitarian values among the indigenous people of India. Among these men we find a number of Sufis who also put in a lot of contribution for Persian literature especially in the area of poetry. The origin and development of Sufi poetry in Bihar can well be understood through the readings of vast contribution by Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri (RA) which continues till the time of Sufi Maneri. Most of the Persian poets in between the period of these two Sufis had great inclination towards mysticism which also reflects through these writings.

There were a number of centres of Persian learning and propagation of Sufi thought. Maner Sharif, Bihar Sharif, Bhagalpur, Hajipur, Saran, Baitho Sharif (Gaya),

Purnia, and Darbhanga were some of the major centres. Various Khanqahs at these centres have been a great source of Persian learning which contribute to function till date.

Persian poets of Bihar were influenced by Sufi school of thought. Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri, Ahmed Chirmposh, Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil, Abul Hassan Fard, Md. Ali Habib Nasr, Sufi Maneri and a number of other Sufi poets of Bihar expressed their mystic experiences through Persian poetry. They have left behind valuable records of their precious thoughts and attitudes towards life. Mysticism has been the dominant note in the Persian poetry of Bihar in general and Sufistic poetry in particular. In the writings of each of them we find great mystical thoughts which were restored and propagated through their respective Khanqahs by adopting a systematic pattern which can surprise any reader and research scholar.

A short account of the Sufi poets of Bihar will substantiate the fact that they left far reaching effect on the Persian poetry of Bihar. Azimabad, Phulwarisharif and Maner were some of the important places of Persian learning in Bihar.

Besides Azimabad, Phulwarisharif has been an important seat of Persian learning. Shah Abul Hasan Fard and Md. Habib Nasr hailed from this place. They belonged to the lineage of Hadrat Tajul Arfin Peer Mojibullah. They have left behind their Persian Diwan and a number of treatises dealing with different theological problems. In poetry they have expressed their Sufistic experiences and mystic thoughts through their works.

A number of other Persian poets of Phulwarisharif who enriched Persian through their sufistic experiences include Shah Nurul Haque Tapan, Shah Badruddin Ahmad Badr, Shah M. Ayetullah Jauhari, Shah Md. Ali Sajjad Nemati, Shah Md. Ayetullah Shorish, Shah Amanullah Taraqqi, Faiz Phulwari and Tamanna Emadi whose notable mystic contributions in the field of Persian literature can not be lost sight of.

Maner has been the next centre of Persian learning since decades. Shah Farzand Ali Sufi Maneri, Shah Abu Nasar Khaleeluddin Ahmad, Josh Maneri and Shah Ethteshmuddin Haider Mashrafi Maeri are eminent Persian poets of Maner. They have left behind their Persian work in poetry. Sufism has been the main theme of their writings. Their craving for

the attainment of spiritual elevation, find prominent place in their mystic poems. Shah Beka Maneri, Shah Abua Mozaffar, Md. Amjad Hussain Maneri, Shah Mahdi Hassan Akhtar Maneri, Shah Faseehuddin Hussain Shuttari Maneri, Shah Lutf Ali Kursi Maneri, shah qayam ali shuttari, qayem maneri and sheikh gholam qadir maneri are a few other notable poets of maner who have contributed to the sufistic Persian poetry of Bihar.

Biharsharif has been the third seat of Persian learning in Bihar. It has been for long centre of attraction but for Hadrat Makhdoom-u-IMulk Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri where the seekers of spiritual knowledge locked from the nook and corner of the Islamic world to satiate their thirst of knowledge. Hadrat Burhanuddin, Muzaffar shams Balkhi, Makhdoom Ahmad Chirmposh, Shah Amin Ahmed Firdausi, Zulam-an Mohd. Shafi are a few among a galaxy o Persian poets of Biharsharif who expressed their mystic thoughts in Persian poetry and left behind records of their sufistic experiences and achievements in the field of their endeavour for realization of the ultimate truth.

A study of this literature and contribution of Sufis reflect that in every century starting from the 8th century till the early century such contribution work relevant. However we do not find any major contribution during the tenth century. There is a possibility that literary pieces and contributions might have been present but could not be preserved. In the 11th century a number of Iranian laureates and poets gathered in Patna. Mirza Sadique Asfahai, the author of Sub-he-Sadique has named Kaleen Arif, Nadim Geelani, Mohammad Hussain Qajwari, Mohammad Moijuddin Jezdi and Mirza Qasim Imani etc. as some of the prominent contributors of this period Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil also belonged to the same period. His name does not require any introduction as he was not only famous in India but also in the whole Persianworld. In Afghanistan, he is considered to be the greatest poet of all times. Collection of his poetry has been published from Kabul in four volumes. Mirza Moiz Maulvi Fitrat who also belongs to the same century was also a great poet. Besides, the above mentioned names there are many others who contributed as Persian poets. Their contribution and work will be discussed in detail. before, discussing prominent sufi poets works in Bihar that I would like to give a brief introduction of Persian sufi poetry.

Persian Sufi poetry

The earlier mystics of Islam had made extensive use of Arabic poetry, whether by seeking inspiration in the recitation of love poetry which could be taken as directed to either a human or a divine beloved, or by composing verses of their own. It was in Persian poetry; however that Sufism was now to find its greatest and most widespread expression, producing what the eastern Islamic world from Turkey to India regards as the highest peaks of its cultural heritage.

From the early 12th century we find expressions of Sufism in other forms of Persian verse; the ode and the long didactic composition in rhyming couplets. The first master of both was Sana'i, a court poet of Ghazna in Afghanistan, who died in 1131. Like Hujwiri, he attacks the local fake dervishes there, and in particular the sexual misconduct of the women mystics. His odes contain not only the praise of wealthy patrons and straightforward exhortations to piety, but also the language of libertinism: he extols wine-drinking, handsome cupbearers and also, in contrast to his attack on their terrestrial self-manifestation in Ghazna, the dervishes who go against the religious law, the Qalandars. The Qalandars are used to represent the higher flights of ecstasy and truth, as opposed to ordinary religiosity:

“Cupbearer give wine since wine alone shatters abstaining
So that I may lose a while this specious world renouncing.....
For a time the religion of Zarathushtra and the custom of the Qalandar
Must be made the Provisions for the spirit which takes the road”¹

Sana'i also composed an extended narrative and didactic poem called *The Journey of God Servants* (Sayr al-‘ibad), which has often been compared to Dante’s divine comedy. In it the narrator acquires a guide an old man who is evidently the active intelligence of the Greek philosophical tradition, that is to say the tenth and the lowest of the immaterial manifestation of reason which, the philosophers believe, emanate from God. Together the poet and the guide journey through the material world and then the heavens, before reaching the universal soul of the neo-Platonists. The highest emanation, the first or

¹ Sana’i, *Diwan*, ed. M.Ridawi (Teheran: Kitabkhana-yi Sana’i, 1355|19760) Pg.26.

universal intelligence or reason, is hidden by veils, which cover different classes of dervishes. Eventually the poet finds a superior rank of these and in it a dominating light, which represents his patron, a local judge, whom Sana'i asks for money at the end.²

Another prominent Persian poet was Attar. His long didactic and narrative poems are usually dominated by the figure of the spirit, which is seen as God's caliph, his deputy on earth. The most famous work of Attar however, *The Language of the Birds* (*Mantiq al-tayr*) was, concerns a search for the king, made by a number of birds. The book has an elaborate structure. Eleven species of birds are presented as discussing the journey ahead. They keep reappearing in the debate as symbols of types of men: the nightingale is the passionate lover, the duck the pious ascetic and so on. The eleventh, the sparrow, represents Jacob, blinded with grief for his lost son Joseph. When the thirty birds who survive the journey come for the great contribution with their king, the fabulous bird called the Simurgh, they are unable to distinguish themselves from him. They are also compared to the ten guilty brothers of Joseph. In an epilogue Attar tells a story about the king who condemns his boyfriend to death, the ten slaves who are ordered to execute him are persuaded not to, and tell the king that he is dead. In the end the king and the boy are reunited.

Attar was also an important lyric poet, who in one of his shorter compositions expressed the current tendency in the direction of monism, the doctrine that there is only one entity in the whole of existence. It is important to realize that hardly any Sufi writer actually professed this doctrine itself. But in the 13th century Sufism moved to a position which was perilously close to monism, so that we can legitimately call it 'monistic'. So attar writes:

Whatever is other than you is mirage and appearance
Since there neither a little nor a lot has come
Here incarnation is unbelief and so is unitive fusion (ittihad)
Since this is a unity but come in repetition.....
How should otherness show itself when everything which exists
Is identical with another one come into appearance?³

² Baldick, Julian, *Mystical Islam*, Tauris Parke Paperbacks, London, Pg.69.

³ Attar, *Diwan*, 1967, ed. T.Tafadduli, Nashr-i-Kitab, Teheran. PG.817.

The most highly regarded of all Sufi poets is Rumi. The name means that he lived in Turkey, where his family (originally from Northern Afghanistan) had taken refuge from Mongols. In Rumi's correspondence there are numerous letters of introduction in which he asks influential personages to help his disciples. His role is presumably that of 'God's friend' which he puts forward in his discourses: if men befriend him, they befriend God too. The world has been created for God's friend, and other mortals have the functions of carpenters and weavers, who make a tent in which he contemplates God.

Rumi's lyric poetry is also permeated by his love for leading fellow Sufi's, notably the wild and ecstatic Shams al-din of Tabriz in north-western Iran. Thus Rumi often puts Shams al-din's name at the end of his poems, indicating that one can reach God only by rising to the level of an ideal Sufi master, who is identified with the universal intelligence: reason itself.

At daybreak a moon appeared in the sky
Came down front how sky and gazed at me
As the falcon that snatches a bird when hunting
That moon snatched me and started running over the sky
When I looked into myself I did not see myself
Because in that moon my body through grace became as spirit
When I traveled in spirit I saw nothing but the moon
So that the secret of the pre-eternal theophany was all revealed
The nine spheres of heaven all went down into that moon
The ship of my being was all hidden in that ocean
That ocean surged in a wave and reason rose again
And cast out a cry so it happened and so it became
That ocean foamed and in every fleck of that foam
A picture of someone came and a body of someone was made
Every foam-fleck of body that received a sign from that ocean
At once melted and in that ocean became spirit
Without the ruling power of shams al-din of Tabriz
One cannot see the moon or become the ocean.⁴

⁴ Rumi, *Kulliyat-i-Shams*, ed. R.A.Nicholson, Vol.2, Tehran University, Tehran, Pg.65-66.

Hazrat Sultan Ahmad Charamposh

Ahmed Charamposh of Ambair was the first cousin of the saint of Maner. He was a mystic, philosopher and poet. His dress consisted of a cap of hide and garments made of sackcloth and he was therefore called as Charamposh.⁵ He belonged to the Suharwardi School of mystics.

A contemporary of Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri, Hazrat Sultan Ahmed Charamposh was born in Hamadan. His father was a king; however Charamposh denounced Kingship and adopted the Sufi life. Since he belonged to Kings Family, 'Sultan' title was attached to him.

Charamposh in Persian means 'one who wears leather'. As to the reason for calling him Charamposh there are two diverse arguments. According to the first argument the word Charamposh was attached to his name because of the fact that he always used to hang leather around his neck. This reference is found in a book titled, تاریخ باره گوان written by Prof. Mujeebur Rahman, Kolkatta. The second argument views as follows: Hazrat Ahmad Langar Dariya Balkhi in his book "Munasul Qulub" writes that Shaikh Hussain and Makhdom Ahmad both went to Hazrat Suleman Mehsawai, who was a disciple of Maulana Taqi Mehsavi Saharwardi. Both Shaikh Hussaion and Makhdoom Ahmad did not have enough cloths to wear. Maulana Taqi gave them 8 Jitals from which Shah Hussain brought 'Dhakkar' and became famous as 'Dhakkarposh', whereas Makhdoom Ahmad brought leather and became famous as Charamposh. We come across quite a number of couplets written by him wherein he feels proud for his leather clothing. Here is one such example:

لباس بادشاهان نیست جز کلاه قبا

شعار احمد دیوانه بست چرم و پلاس

⁵ Diwakar, Bihar through ages. Pg.453.

Another such example can be found in the couplet given below

از پلاس و چرم مارا معنی دیگر نمود معنی و صورت مگر در خرقة پشیمن ماست⁶

In an article published by Patna University Journal in 1954, Prof. S.H. Askari explains the reason of his nomenclature as Charamposh. His theory is based on the second version of Munasul Qulub.

"شیخ احمد چرمپوش و شیخ مهسوی بخدمت شیخ سلیمان رفتند- بیج جامه نه دانشتند، شیخ سلیمان ایشان را بشت چیتل داند که هر دو نفران برای خود ستر کنید- چون هر دو بزرگان از پیش خدمت شیخ سلیمان برخاستند، بیرون آمدند میان خود اندیشه کردند که بدین مقدار جامه دو نفر نشود- پس خدمت شیخ دهکڑ خریدند و خدمت شیخ احمد چرم ستیدند- چون هر دو بزرگان پوشیده پیش خدمت سلیمان رفتند- خدمت شیخ فرمودند، "شمارا ہمیں کافی بست مبارک-"⁷

Besides Charamposh he was also known as Tegh-e-Barhana. He received this name in Tibet, where a number of his opponents are said to have been killed by his miraculous sword.

As for the literary contribution of Hazrat Sultan Ahmad Charamposh, there is a 'Diwan' and a 'Malfuz' titled 'Zia-ul-Qulub', which was published by Mahmudul Motabe, Kanpur in 1320 A.H. this Malfuz was compiled by one of his disciple's name Alaudin Ali Bin Ibrahim Sufi. The Malfuz consists of 58 pages. It contains nine chapters as given below

باب اول : در شناختن خود و طلب علم-

باب ثانی : در سیر کردن و صحبت گرفتن-

باب ثالث : در شناختن نفس علوی و سفلی-

⁶ Diwan-e- Ahmad Jaam, Page 93

⁷ Munasul Qulub, Page 166

- باب ثالث : در شناختن نفس علوی و سفلی-
- باب رابع : در خلوت بعض و از خلق بریدن-
- باب خامس : دریافتن خود با طبع مختلف-
- باب ششم : در معرفت روح و نفس و عقل-
- باب هفتم : در شناختن پنج حواس و قبض و ادن-
- باب ثامن : در حیرت سکتہ حاصل حاید-
- باب نهم : در اخلاق بودن و صبر کردن-⁸

Besides this Malfuz, a Diwan also is written by him. Manuscripts of this Diwan are available at many places including the renowned Khudabaksh Library, Patna. However the author of this manuscript had been mentioned as Ahmad Jaan Zinda Pir. Pages from 1 to 114 contain verses of Hazrat Sultan Ahmad Charamposh whereas pages from 115 to 167 contain the verses of Ahmad Jaan Zinda Pir.

Khuda Bakhsh library has a Deewan of Ahmad Jaan Zinda Pir which was published by Naval Kishore Press. Most of the verses in this Deewan belong to Hazrat Sultan Ahmad Charamposh; however this press mistook it for Ahmad Jaan. The pen-name used in this Deewan and other internal details suggest that the whole Deewan does not belong to Ahmad Jaan and only a limited portion belongs to him.

Two couplets mentioned earlier in the same chapter while discussing the nomenclature of Hazrat Sultan Ahmad Charamposh also belong to the same Deewan. This substantiates the fact that the Deewan does not belong to Ahmad Jaan.

⁸ As quoted by Firdausi, Dr. Imamuddin, Bihar Ke Farsi Go Sufi Shaoara Pages 80,81

احمدی را نه کند چشم عنایت شاید	بادشاهی ابدی را چه غم از رنج فقیر ⁹
احمد زره ترک چو تجرید گرفته است	سرمایه خود ساخته چرمی و پلاسی
نیست جز چرم پلاسی همه کس را پوشش	طائران چمن فقر بد این بال پرند
پلاس و چرم را احمد گزیدی	لباس پارسائی بر تو زیباست
آنکس که سرا پرده بصرای عدم زد	در ملک بقا از سر تجرید قلم زد
منتهی سخن، کان خرد، خواجه نظامی	کو ختیمه گفتار به بستانی ارم زد
هر در که از آن درج گر بار بروں شد	صناع فلک ساخته در گوش نسیم زد
سلطان سخندان و سخن گوئی سخنور	کو سکه خود را همه بر ملک عجم زد
افراشته رایات سخن بر سر عالم	اعلام خرد بر سر نه چرخ نجم زد
احمد بطفیلش همه اعزاز سخن یافت	صد طعنه بر اصحاب همه سیم و دم زد ¹⁰
احمد از مدح توشه طوطی گویائی سخن	لطف کن تا که سخنهایش شکر جانیبید

Charamposh's writings also include many Ghazals and some Qasidas (eulogies). There is also a Masnavi with the title of Monajat. We also come across some Qitaat

⁹ Diwan-e- Ahmad Jaam, Page 24

¹⁰ As quoted by Firdausi, Dr. Imamuddin, Bihar Ke Farsi Go Sufi Shaoara Pages 84,85

Charamposh's writings also include many Ghazals and some Qasidas (eulogies). There is also a Masnavi with the title of Monajat. We also come across some Qitaat containing two couplets. We cannot call these couplets as Rubaihs because they do not follow the rhythm and matter of a Rubai.

Since he was renowned Sufi and lead an esoteric and mystic way of life, his poetry is full of spiritual feelings and thoughts. Hence his poetry gives a deep insight to his own spiritual self. And his religious commitment

Like all Sufis of Bihar, he recognized truth in every faith and emphasized the need of love. To him, 'Islam' and 'Kufr' all became one through love. He never gave too much importance to the material world. For him materialistic developments were of total non significance. He was a true lover of God and hence he visualized God in every particle of the universe. The only truth before him was God and the rest was mortal. He was a true believer of Wahdatul Wajood.

His writings give a total reflection of his spiritual experiences and feelings. There are a number of verses which can be the examples of his mystical, spiritual and philosophical thoughts.

اسرار غیب دوش نمودار شد مرا	هر رمز عشق جمله پدیدار شد مرا
گنجی که بود در تق غیب آشکار	آئینه جمال رخ یار شد مرا
در نهان که در جگ دریای عشق بود	اکنون ز فیض او در اظهار شد مرا
هر صورتی که در نظرم گشت آشکار	در هر طلسم گنج نمودار شد مرا
حسن خدای آنکه نهان بود در عشق	ناگه پدید از رخ دلدار شد مرا
انوار حسن دوست بهر ذره ظاهر است	لیکن عیان بحلقه زنار شد مرا

بخواست احمدی که کند سر عشق فاش

اما دلیل شرح نگهدار شد مرا¹¹

Once Irfan is attained, it wipes out all the distance between an individual and the creator paving way for condition where the individual get a sense of انا الحق. Sometimes extremist and men with orthodox thinking start comparing this situation with Kufr and Ilhaad. We also find spiritual thoughts close to اناالحق in the writings of Hazrat Sultan Ahmad Charamposh

ضم در جملہ موجودات پیدا	ضم در کسوت آدم ہویدا
ضم اجز من دگر کس نیست موجود	که ظاہر گشتہ ام در جملہ اشیا
ہر آن ذرہ کہ در کون و مکان است	ز تاب من شدہ خورشید سیمہ
ضم دریا دہر موجی کی بینی	نمودار بست آن از عین دریا
من آن خورشید تا بانم کہ ہر صبح	کنم ہر ذرہ را خورشید آسا
نبرد من چہ کفر است و چہ ایمان	چہ دین مومن و چہ راہ ترسا
گہی ہر صورت مجنون و لیلی	گہی ظاہر شدم ہر شکل حوا
گہی دریا شدم آبی نمودم	گہی چوں کویہ گشتم گاہ صحرا
ز کج بینی دو بیند مرد اصول	بہ بیند راست یکتا مرد بینا
چو احمد در ہمہ موجود یک دید	یکے بین شد بفضل حق تعالی ¹²

¹¹ Ibid page 86,87

¹² Ibid page 87

Since he was a believer of 'Wahdatul-Wajood' there are many examples of such feelings in his poetry

آن خداوندی که پیدا جمله اوست هر لباس ما هویدا جمله اوست

One can know God by knowing himself first. This idea of self-realization has also been touched upon by Hazrat Charnposh. A number of his Ghazals are the best examples to show his views on knowing God through self-realization.

ای آنکه درین راه طلبگار شمائید	خود را شناسید شما جمله خدائید
در خویش بجوئید هم اوصاف خدائی	در راه طلب طالب مطلوب شمائید
والله دیگر نیست به بیند بخاطر	از راه یقین جانب توحید گرانید
کس نیست بجز ذات خداوند تعالی ¹	ای زبره ظلاب شما جمله کجائید
کز دست یقین راه بیابید باین جا	در خویش بیند شما جمله همائید
مقصود و طلب جمله شمائید به بیند	انا کعبه مغلوب شما جمله ببائید
انوار حقیقی خدا نیست بد اینجا	ذات احدی صورت احمد بنمائید ¹³

To understand the style of his ghazal writings let us take an example of one of his ghazals

جمالت اهل نظر اهل نظر باد	ز خاکپای تو کچل بصر باد
هر آنکس کو بنا دیز بزلفت	چو زلف دائما زیر و زبر باد
به زیرپای تو سربان عشاق	لگارا هر زمانی بی سپر باد

¹³ Diwan-e-Ahmadi, patna University Library, Patna

بگرد عارض تو سبز تر باد

ز باران دو چشم بر زمانی

دل مشتاق بر دم بیخبر باد

ز جام عشق تو مخمور و سرمست

دبانم زان حلاوت پر شکر باد

بیاد آرم حدیث لعل شیرینیت

The mood is consistent despite being a ghazal there is an inherent continuity. Dr. Syed Shah Imam Firdausi, in his book, "Bihar ke Farsi go Sufi Shoara", goes to an extent of comparing his ghazals with the likes of Hafiz and Rumi.¹⁴

He died most probably in 1364. he was a gifted poet and a divinely attracted mystic . Askari¹⁵ describes him as an inspired Sufi transported on the wings of mystical fervour, which became at times immoderate in his pantheistic utterances, so as to expose himself to the charge of Blasphemy. The Wujudt (Unitarian) were orthodox Muslims alive to the needs of restraint. Hazrat Sultan Ahmad Charamposh wrote, "At times Ahmad felt inclined to disclose the secrets, but Shara became the arguer and preserver; it behoves you, O'Ahmad not to reveal the secrets of truth". He was a clear headed poet and ascetic, a latitudinarian, even patriotic in his views. He viewed "Islam and Kufr (infidelity) become one and are of the same hue through love to those who are swimmers in the divine ocean. Regard all religions as one and look on them all as one, for divinity is one and unit less. There is no duality in my religion. I regard the whole world as one"¹⁶.

He says that like Rumi and Hafiz, the ghazals of Hazrat Charamposh show a great deal of continuity, with its couplets reflective of the true divine self. He has explained the beautiness of the beloved, the dependence of the lover, his purity and surrender in a beautiful manner. There are times when besides the joyous and pleasant mood he expresses his desertion and restlessness. For example

مخطه اشک در افشان مرا یاد آوید

دوستان یک نفسی جان مرا یاد آوید

¹⁴ Firdausi, I.S.S., Bihar ke Farsi go Sufi Shoara, Page No.10.

¹⁵ Askari, S.H., Islam and Muslims in Medieval Bihar, Khuda Baksh Oriental Library, Pg.101.

¹⁶ Quoted by Askari in an article, 'Hazrat Ahmad Chirmposh, a 14th century Sufi Saint of Bihar, Patna University Journal, VIII, 1954.

بر شما باد که چون خنده زند گلی بچمن	گریه نرگس مستان مرا یاد آوید
بر شما باد که چون بزم طرب ساز کنید	شورش شمع شبستان مرا یاد آوید
در محلیکه شما جمع نشیند بعییس	ساعتی حال پریشان مرا یاد آوید
چون خرامید با طراف چمن بهر نشاط	جنبش سرو خرامان مرا یاد آوید
چون کند باد سحر سوسن و سوری در رقص	یک زمان غنچه خندان مرا یاد آوید
چون نسیم سحری تازه کند جان شما	نفسه سنبل پیچان مرا یاد آوید
اندر آن دور که ساقی بدید دور شراب	اندر آن دایره دوران مرا یاد آوید
چون در آن مجلس شادی به نشنید هم	احمدی بی سرو سامان مرا یاد آوید ¹⁷

The Ghazals of Hazrat Charamposh have purity, simplicity and exmple style of writing. He makes use of simple and soft words to express his feelings. While writing ghazals he focused on sweetness of terms. A look at the Qasida writings of Hazrat Charamposh, which is rare, we find that there is a immense flow of emotions in them, though this Qasidas are meager. The standard, ethics and quality of Qasida writings is excellent. Given below is a good example of Sabk-e-Khrasari style of writings.

آنکس که سرا پرده بصحرای عدم زد	در ملک بقا از سر تجرید قدم زد
بر حرف که بر تخته هستی رقمی داشت	برداشت بکلی بسر حرف قلم زد
او رخس فنا گرد ز کونین بر آورد	از خون جگر آنکه در آن نامید دم زد
آنکس که دلش محرم اسرار خدا شد	بر لوح دل از خانه توحید رقم زد

¹⁷ As quoted by Firdausi, Dr. Imamuddin, Bihar Ke Farsi Go Sufi Shaoara Pages 90,91

He traveled widely through Central Asia and came to India during the time of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1388 A.D.). The Sultan was impressed by his personality and paid a visit to his Khanqah. Contrary of lofty principles of tolerance and compassion so much emphasized and cherished by the Sufis, he unblushingly exhibited the inhuman passions of a fanatic. He preached violence and persecution saying:

‘The dwellings of the Rafizis should be burnt down and that they deserved fire and sword’.¹⁸ His contribution to Persian consists in his mystic utterances as compiled by his disciples, and in his Diwan (poetical works). Besides his diwan consisting of 1280 poems, of which five are interpolated, reminding us of the thoughts of Rumi, Iraqi, Ahmad Jam, Nizami, Maghrabi, Anwari etc, there is a small book in verse containing his sayings. The booklet comprising nine chapters styled Diyaul Qulaub, and it was composed by ‘Alau’din Ibrahim sufi. The saint of Ambair was a disciple of Alau’din Chirmposh of Puraini (Bhagalpur). Sirat-i-Firuz Shahi and Rafiqul ‘Arifin of Hesamud Din Manikpuri tells us in detail about the interview between Tuqluq emperor and the saint of Ambair.

Abdul-Qāder Bedil

Abul Ma’āni Mirzā Abdul-Qāder Bedil or Mawlānā Abul Ma’āni Abdul Qader Bedil also Bidel Dehlavi (1642–1720) was a famous Persian poet and Sufi born in Azimabad (present day Patna, India); his family was from Badakhshan (present day Afghanistan). According to some other sources, he was born in Khwaja Rawash, an area of Kabul province in today's Afghanistan¹⁹.

He mostly wrote Ghazal and Rubayee (quatrain) in Persian. He is considered as one of the prominent poets of "Indian School of Poetry" in Persian literature, and owns his unique Style in it. Both Mirza Ghalib and Iqbal-e Lahori were influenced by him. His books include "Telesm-e Hairat", "Toor e Ma'refat", "Chahār Unsur" and "Ruqa'āt".

Possibly as a result of being brought up in a mixed religious environment, Bedil had considerably more tolerant views than his poetic contemporaries. He preferred free thought

¹⁸ Nabi Hadi, Dictionary of Persian Literature, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, 1995. Pg.45.

¹⁹ Ibid, Page12.

to accepting the established beliefs of his time, siding with the common people and rejecting the clergy who he often saw as corrupt.

Bedil was also attached to the court of Mohhamad Azam, son of Aurangzeb who was the governor of Bengal. He went to Deccan and then returned to Delhi where he has spent the rest of his life. He died in 1133 A.H. and was buried there. he got inspiration and guidance from Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Ijlat. He was a voluminous writer. He left behind a number of his works including a voluminous Kulliyat. Upon his emergence as a poet, Bedil gained recognition throughout the Iranian cultural continent. Since late 18th century his poetry gradually lost its position among Iranians while it has been much welcomed in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan. Bedil came back to prominence in Iran in 1980s. Literary critics Mohammad-Reza Shafiei-Kadkani and Shams Langrudi were instrumental in Bedil's re-emergence in Iran. Iran also sponsored two international conferences on Bedil. ["International Seminar on Mirza Bedil", March 2003, Tehran, [<http://www.iranhouseindia.com/year03/bedil.htm> Link]

Indian school of Persian poetry and especially Bedil's poetry is criticized for its complex and implicit meanings, however, it is much welcomed in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and India than in Iran. The main reason could be his style which is kept a bit "Indian". In Afghanistan, a unique school in poetry studying is dedicated to Bedil's poetry called "Bedil Shināsī" (Bedil studies) and those who have studied his poetry are called "Bedil Shinās" (Bedil expert). His poetry plays a major role in Indo-Persian classical music of central Asia as well. Many Persian (Tajik) classical musicians, i.e. Mohammad Hussain Sarahang, have sung plenty of Bedil's ghazals.

His grave, called Bagh-e-Bedil (Garden of Bedil) is situated at Mathura Road in Delhi. Ustaad Sayed Mohammad Daoud Al'Hossaini, an Afghan Bedil expert, arguably showed those seven months after his funeral, Bedil's body was brought back by friends and relatives from Delhi to Khwaja Rawash in Kabul, where the relatives of Barlas-e Tshaghatai lived. The grave is also called Bagh-e-Bedil (Garden of Bedil). Sallahouddin-e Saljouqi proves this thesis on p.87 of his book "Naqd-e Bedil" that Bedil's grave does not exist in Delhi, but in Khwaja Rawash.

Bedil in his poetry celebrated the enigmatic and silence,lets now look at one such couplet:
The nature of madness is not a static reality,
The apparent may fly ever so high, but it can never be
The Unapparent. Even if the two worlds talked away
Until they turned to blood, the speech that attains
The level of silence would be impossible²⁰

There can be little doubt that Bedil's glorification of the enigmatic, his valorization of silence over speech, and his demand that his meanings be heard to the exclusion of all others; all of these have some Sufistic, or even general, non-Islamic mystical dimension. But here we are concerned with the literary statement that such pronouncements make. Communication and comprehension are not the same; silence has a speech of its own, purer and closer to truth, language often lets down the poet down; poets hardly use the common everyday speech and a poet's speech has to be interpreted. These propositions are an important part of the poetics of Bedil and are some of the chief reasons why this poetry sounds so unfamiliar to an ordinary reader of Persian poetry.

Bedil writes,

The eternal mysteries
following wisdoms lead,
brought forth
the human form
as their living proof
as long as the drop
hasn't emerged from the sea
the ocean didn't notice
the depths of its splendour.²¹

²⁰ Quoted in Hasan,Hussaini, Bedil, Siphiri Va Sabk-i-Hindi,Sarosh, Teheran, Pg.86.

²¹ Abdur Qadir Bedil-His living Proof, English translation Of Bedil's Poems (Translated by David and Sabrineh Friedler), Polity Press, London, Pg15.

The "human form" in this poem is not so much a reference to human physical body as to human consciousness. Abu Al-ma'ani Bedil is saying that humanity was created by God to be a living witness to Divinity. This is the "living proof." He is not stating that the human body itself somehow proves the existence of the "eternal mysteries;" rather, it is through the witnessing consciousness of humanity that the Divine knows itself in fullness. Abu Al-Ma'ani Bedil makes this clearer with the metaphor of the second verse: It is only when the "drop" emerges from the "sea" that the "ocean" can envision "the depths of its own splendor."

In other words, Abu Al-ma'ani Bedil is giving us an answer to that fundamental spiritual question: Why does separation exist within the universe? If all is One, if everything fundamentally exists in God, why is there this devastating sense of separation and duality? The answer many mystical traditions give is that Eternal Unity divides mundane perception into the duality of seer and seen as a way to deepen the full knowledge of Being. Humanity, in this sense, has as its most important role that of witnessing Divinity. From this viewpoint, you could say that humanity becomes the eye of God. Human consciousness becomes a reflection of the Divine consciousness, a mirror in which the Eternal Unity can view itself.

But there is an added twist to the common perception of duality. When one fulfills the role of witnessing God beyond the dizzying and sometimes heartbreaking multiplicities of the dualistic universe... the dualism fades away, revealing itself as having been an elaborate illusion. In truth, everything has always been one from start to finish. So we have a circular game of awareness: unity seeks self-knowledge through duality, but self-knowledge returns us to unity. The drop no matter how high it is flung into the air, eventually falls back into the embrace of the ocean and merges once more. Even high above the waves, the drop is water. And once returned to the ocean, it is still water (but no longer imagines it to be a separate drop).

Shah Nurul Haque Tapan

Shah Nurul Haque Tapan was born in Phulwari Sharif in 1156 AH/ 1743-44 AD. He received his basic education under the guidance of his father Shah Abdul Haque and his grand father Shah Mujibullah. He died on 9th June 1818 at Patna, however he was buried near the grave of Hazrat Lal Mian in Phulwari Shrif.

Shah Tapan compiled all the thoughts and activities of Mujibia Family and wrote a Tazkira entitled Anwar-e-Tariquat. This piece contains the translations of the Sufis of Mujibiya Family. His second book Tablighul Haajaat deals with religious discourses and thoughts on how to lead life. Both these books are very good examples of Persian prose writings of his period. The manuscripts of both these books are available at Kahnkah-e-Imadiya, mangal Talab, Patna City. Besides these two prose pieces, he has two Persian Diwans in his name Anwarut Tariqat Fi Izharul Haquiqat, deals with the thoughts and beliefs of various Sufis. It also describes the life history of some of the Sufi saints. A study of the book reveals that among the predecessors of Shah Mujibullah Qadri, he was the first one to have got hands on Tazkira Nigari.

Besides these there are two more prose pieces of Nurul Haque Tapan. Ijazat Nama-e-Maulana Zahurul Haque, which contains an ijazatnama and also describes the minute details of mysticism. The book contains valuable information on mysticism.

Another literary piece, a bilingual magazine (Resalah) named Majmua-e-Auradwa Wazaif was written by him which also covers the topics on mysticism.

As far as poetry goes, he has two diwans in his name. Both of these start with Qasidah in the name of Allah.

Besides Qasidahs , Tapan's diwan also contain Marsiyah consisting of 12 paras. Each para of this marsiya contains 10 couplets. Nurul Haque Tapan has also written a Mathnavi entitled " Mathnavi Dar Shrah-e-haal wa Tamheed-e-Qasa'ed-e Matlul Anwar. He has written some ghazals as well. The number of his ghazals has been quoted as 4-8 in various sources.

His Qasidas are influenced by the great Persian classical poets as he used to study them quite a lot. He since his childhood was inclined towards going through the poetry of these great poets and hence his writing too has similarity with and is under the influence of classical Persian poetry. In one of his Qasidas, he describes his personality as

رشک آید و خون از دل حاسد بچکاند شد می دهم او فضل و کمال اب و عم را
جز خاک در جد کریم به جهان نیست جائیکه بود سجده سر اهل کرم را
نازم به نسب نامه که این سلسله آخر بر پای پیمبر بر سانید سرم را

This Qasida has clear influences of the poetry writing by Urfi Shirazi. Here is what Urfi writes:

اقبال کرم می گزد ارباب هم را همت نخورد نبشتر لا و نعم را

In one of his other Qasidas he draws the picture of Majlis of Shah Mujibullah in following lines:

سبک به چشم و رفته به محفلی که دران نبود جای من و مانه برده پندار
بساط صحن مقدس صریر خلد بریں ز نور مهر هدایت چراغ بر دیوار
کشته اصل دلان سر نهاده بر در دل به چار سوی بساطش بسان موج جدار
ترانه سنج نقی به لحق داؤ دی خلش به سینه چنگ از فغان و ناله تار
بوجد آمده ناگه ز شوق زیبائی که دل ز پر تو او گشت مشرق الانوار
چه گویم از روش او که دل بدست نماند چه گویم از اثر او که برد صبر و قرار
ز جلوه که نمودار بود از همه سو گهی یکی و گهی صد و گهی هزار هزار

بگریه گفتمش ای مایه سرور دلم بگو بگو که چه ای و ز کجای از من زار
 خرد گوش مجلس بردن دو بده بچشم نگاه کرد و بمن گفت ای طپان حسینار
 نفس به سینه نگهدار و بی ادب مخروش سخن نبوش شعر از من ز گوش پنجه برآر

As mentioned earlier, there are also examples of Marthiya Nigari in his Diwan. In one of his Marthiyas, he describes the Shahadat of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) as follows:²²

از خون دل آغشته قلم می کنم اشب آشوب غم است اینکه رقم می کنم اشب
 خیزد ز حریر قلم شور قیامت از ناله دل ساز نغم می کنم اشب
 نبود عجب از زهره و مریخ لبوزد زین شعله و آبی که علم می کنم اشب
 بر روی سیاهی فلک تیره چه حاصل کین دود دل سوخته غم می کنم اشب
 چوں موج درین بحر خطر خیز مصیبت می غلطم و سر زیر قدم می کنم اشب
 دل شعله جگر آب و من از بی خبر بها این آتش و این آب بهم می کنم اشب
 مجنون و سراسیمه و بیتاب و توان هم گویند مرا هر چه نعم می کنم اشب
 این ماتم آن شاه شهیدانست که هر دم دامن نگه از مژه نم می کنم اشب
 آن نیر دین ماه شب افروز پیغمبر خورشید جهان روشنی روز پیغمبر

Since Nurul Haque Tapan was a Sufi himself, his general poetry writing is influenced by Sufi thoughts and carries religious discourses, teachings on moral values and

²² As quoted by Firdausi, Dr. Imamuddin, Bihar Ke Farsi Go Sufi Shaoara Pages 177

other religious preaching. We also find some Rubaiyat written by him carrying romantic thoughts and philosophy. For example:

ای یار چرا به خون کشیدی مارا و ز تیغ جفا گلو بریدی مارا
بودیم بخاک تو طپان بی تو و تو زین راه گذشتی و نه دیدی مارا

Hence we find that the poetry writing of Nurul Haque Tapan was influenced by the writings of great classical Persian poets such as Hafiz, Rumi, Naziri, Bedil, Urfi and others. His basic thoughts included sufi thoughts and preaching on religious way of life as and other moral values.

Shah Abul Hasan Fard

He was born on 10th, rajab 1191 A.H. at Phulwari (Patna). He received his elementary education from his father, Shah Nematullah, Wali. He completed his education at the age of 20 by Maulana Ahmadi, a reputed scholar. He wanted to finalize his education by Shah Addul Aziz but he could not. In 1247 A.H. he became the pontiff head of Khangah-i-Mojibia, Phulwarisharif after the death of his father. He died on 24th muharram 1255 A.H. by the fatal disease of paralysis and was buried at Phulwarisharif²³.

Fard was a reputed scholar of Bihar. He wrote a number of Arabic and Persian booklets. From the very childhood he was prone to poetry. The contributions made by Fard during the first half of 13th Century AH, is quite significant. His poetry has been published in two volumes.²⁴ The first volume contains 659 Ghazals whereas the second volume contains 926 ghazals²⁵.

Fard belonged to a period when almost each learned man and sufi had inclination towards poetry writing. A number of Mushairas were conducted in those days too. Fard

²³ Sher, S.A. Contribution of Bihar to Arabic, Persian and Islamic Learning (A Collection of papers read in a seminar), Pg. No.44

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Firdausi, Dr. Imamuddin, Bihar Ke Farsi Go Sufi Shaoara Pages 187

was a regular participant in those Mushairas and literary congregations. In such an environment it was quite obvious that he too would develop an inclination towards poetry writing and so did happen. His writing too was influenced by the great classical poets like Hafiz, Sadi, Khusrau, Jami, Anwari, Nizami, Faizi, Urfi, and others.

The first ghazal of Fard is on the pattern of Hafiz's Ghazal starting with

آنانکه خاک را منظر کیمیا کنند آیا بود که گوشه چشمی بما کنند

Fard's ghazal goes as follows:

روزیکه عاصیان امم را ندا کنند	آنها نگاه سوی رسول خدا کنند
گویند آن شهبی که تو شاهان برای فخر	جان را بخاک پای سگانت فدا کنند
ہاں وقت عاجز لیست خدارا شفاعتی	ای آنکہ خاکپای ترا تو پتا کنند
رحمی بحال خستہ دلان کن کہ جرمہا	ترسم بہ پیش حضرت ایزد چہا کنند
آنانکہ حل عقدہ مشکل کنند کاش	آیا بود کہ گوشہ چشمی بما کنند
باشد کہ از عنایت و الطاف فرد را	از دام شرمساری و بجلت رہا کنند

As mentions earlier, there are two diwans belonging to Fard. The first volume contains the ghazals which he wrote in his initial days of writing. The second volume was written in the later part of his life. This volume is very much reflective of his maturity and his grip over ghazal writing is quite apparent. In these gazals he creates a striking balance between the feelings and emotions. For these ghazals he makes use of very simple words and terminologies. To get a better practice of poetry writing, Fard adopted the pattern of great Persian poets such as Hafiz and others. He tried to carry the same flow, experience, lyrics and emotion as followed by the great classical poets which made his poetry strong and effective.

However, by doing so, he lost his individuality in poetry writing and could not maintain a flow and subject which could have been said to be individual in nature. Despite this, there was definitely a sense of sincerity, gravity and grip of thoughts in poetry writing. Maulavi Mohammad Hussain Saba in his Tazkira-e-Roz-e- Roshan describes the poetry writing of Fard in following words:

"سید شاه محمد ابوالحسن قادری خلف و جانشین سید شاه نعمت الله از مشائخ قصبه پهلواری متصل عظیم آباد بود و در احتوای فضائل صوری و معنوی تجلیه و تصفیہ باطن و ارشاد و تلقین طالبان حق الیقین نظیر نداشت."²⁶

Most of his ghazals contain the thoughts pertaining to Divine Love. For Example:

تب سرمست ناز من کجائی	نمی بینی نیاز من کجائی
چو ساز شمع خبر سوری نباشد	نه امشب بساز من کجائی
دلم در رهگذارنست ای ترک	نمی آئی نیاز من کجائی
فلک در صید گاہت خاک من بیخت	خدارا شاه باز من کجائی
دلم از انتظار نست بیجان	مسیح دل نواز من کجائی
غمت بگداخت چوں شمع تو فارغ	ازین سوز و گداز من کجائی
محبت سوخت جان فرد خاموش	تو ای دانای راز من کجائی ²⁷

²⁶ Maulavi Mohammad Hussain Saba, Tazkira –e- Roz-e- Roshan page 615

²⁷ Diwan-e-Fard page 266

Shaikh Husamud-Din Manik Puri

He hailed from Qaza, the district of Purnea. He was Khalifa of Nurud-Din Qutb-i-Alam Of Bengal. His preachings have been collected in the Rafique Arafan. He advocated a strict stoicism and discipline in order to claim the cloak of spiritual Succession (Khirqa-i-Khilafat). He observed the vow of fast for seven long years continually.²⁸ After the completion of this fast, his missionary career began. He was very famous in Bengal and Bihar. The Sufi order established by him is called as Husamiya order. He was active in North Bengal and Bihar. He died at Manikpur (Purnea) in 1477 A.D. among his noted disciples were Raja Hamid Shah and Shah Sidu. He was a wealthy man but he gave away all his fortune for the spread of Islam.²⁹ Shah Sidu was a poet saint of merit. He died in 526 A.H. | 1461 A.D.

Shahbaz Bhagalpuri

He was a Sufi saint of Shahjahan's era (1628-1658) who was very popular and revered by many people. At Purnea, Hazrat Shaikh Mustafa Jamalul Haque was a noted saint in the seventh line of Hazrat Nur Qutb-i-Alam Pindwi. There is a famous place Betu Sharif in Gaya noted for the seventh successor of Makhdum Ashraf Samnani, namely Hazrat Makhdum Darwish. Among the monasteries, established during the 11th century Hijri, one of Hazrat Emalud-Din Qalandar is noted at Monghal talab in Patna city. Hazrat Pir Mujibullah took leading part in propagating Islam, in and around, the Khanqah situated at Phulwari Sharif. And its another branch named Sulemaniya is doing valuable work.³⁰

Maulana Ahmad Langar Darya Balkhi

Ahmad Langar Darya says he was born on the 27th Ramzan A.H. 826, A.D. 1423. Probably on account of his strength of character and devoutness as a Sufi he was commonly called as 'Langar-i- Darya'.³¹ He belonged to a Sufi family of Bihar and was the grandson of Shaikh Husaini-i-Muiz Balkhi. In his free wanderings, he passed through

²⁸ Tazkira-i-Auliya Hind, Part 2, Pg.36.

²⁹ Diwakar, Op.Cit, Pg59

³⁰ Md.Tayyab Abdali, Jada—i-Irfan, Khanqah Islampur, Nalanda, 1978, Pg.41.

³¹ Nabi Hadi, Op Cit. Pg.42.

the entire Arabic peninsula from Syria to South Yemen. Primarily a Suharwardi and Firdausi, he bypassed the convention of his order and was an ardent supporter of Sama; the Sufi music. He was a strong minded, purposeful man, who was gifted with an extraordinary intellect. He died in 1486.

Besides, being a prominent Sufi and Spiritual guide, he was also known for his literary contribution to Persian literature especially in the arena of poetry. Though less in quantity, his works are of great qualitative significance.

The thoughts expressed in his poetry give an insight into the then Sufi tradition of Bihar in particular.

A distinct mark of his writing is the importance given to Khanqahi traditions, which include:

1. The decorum and etiquettes of Convent (Khanqah) life
2. The evolution and development of teacher-disciple relation
3. Arrangement of discourse meetings
4. Interpretation and explanation of essential themes of day-to-day life
5. Etiquettes of Majlis (religious gatherings)
6. Ethical values of life.

Like other Sufis of Bihar, his poetry consists of Ghazals, as well as of some Mathnavis. Purity of thought, divine love and surrendering to God are some of the main themes of his ghazal writings. For example this couplet

مدام عشق مارا نوش بادا	همیشه عقل ما مدبوش بادا
شراب شوق وصل خاک کوبت	چو آتش دائما در جوش بادا
هماره عقل ای لیلی از عشقت	چون مجنون از همه مدبوش بادا

مرا ہم چوں در اندر گوش بادا

ہمیشہ حلقہ ہائے بند گیت

رساں معشوقہ در آغوش بادا³²

خداوند تو احمد را بمقصود

His poetry has an astonishing resemblance to the writing of Maulana Rumi. Though Maulana's work is in Mathnavi form, he discusses divine love in the simplest of expression and poetic forms. Self-realisation is another topic which has been touched upon by him. Dariya in his writings views that self-realisation is an important feature in realizing our weaknesses, which would ultimately help him in getting closer and closer to God, for example he writes:

ترا یک ذرہ در خود عیب دیدم بہ از صد نوع غیب الغیب دیدم

His philosophy also includes the idea of not giving up, and to always be hopeful of getting "Khair". He was an optimistic person and wanted all people to believe in God and be hopeful. Though his writings lack literary skills and fervour, we do come across certain examples in his writings which contradicts this view. Though less in quantity, wherever found, is of great significance and reflects the fact that he too, could make use of these literary skills. One such example is use of lyrical writings, coupled with Sanai-e-Takrar. Such writings reflect similarity with 13th century Iranian poets like Qaani. Langar Dariya, almost five centuries ahead of Qa'ani wrote some pieces full of Lyrical skills which are worth to be mentioned

بہار آمد بہار آمد ہمہ گلہا بہار آمد ولی بی دوست ہر ساعت بجانم خار خار آمد

ہر جانب نسیم گل، بہر سو نغمہ بلبیل شدہ مستان ہمہ بی دل کہ اکنون بوئے یار آمد

بیا مطرب بزن دستی و غم را خاک بر سر نہ بیا ساقی بدہ بادہ کہ بار اندر کنار آمد

دلم بگرفتہ شد کلی ز صتیسای ہشیاراں کنوں در یاد تو مستم کہ این می خوشگوار آمد

³²Diwan -e-Ahmad Langar Darya, page 8

بر و در باغ باهر گل چو بلبل عشقبازی کن هر آنکس کو چنین کاری نکردان وی چه کار آمد

In his writings, we do come across certain pieces which give us an idea of geopolitical and cultural conditions of his period in Bihar. In one of his ghazals he gives us an idea of the condition of Biharsharif where he led his life. He also mentions the various aspects of environment, the beauty and calmness of natural resources such as mountains and rivers and other aspects of nature in his ghazals. Here is one such example

این بهار مقدم پیران ماست	زاں چنین روشن مروج دلرباست
همچو طور از لطف حق هر قصه اش	فیض جودش هر صباح و هر ماست
جوهری باشد که بشناسد گهر	پیش عامی سنگ و گوهر یک بهاست
مرد مادر سنگ گوهر دیده اند	نور حق در دیده شان دائماست
دیده ای باید که او هر ذره را	آفتابی بیند آن از نشاست

Besides Ghazals, we also come across a few Mathnavis of Maulana Ahmad Langar Dariya Balkhi. Like Rumi, the central theme of Masnavi is 'Ishq' (Love).

The spiritual teachers who guided Ahmad on the mystic path had taught him to hate ostentation and to study his own defects. Ahmad says:

“ For you it is better to perceive one of your smallest defects
Than to see the invisible in a hundred ways.”³³

Ahmad is known chiefly for his work Munis-ul-Qulub (a collection of his sayings and utterances). This work is in the same style as the 'maktubat' and 'malfuzat' of other Sufi writers of the period. Incidentally it provides information of some considerable value

³³ Diwakar, Op.Cit Pg.455.

by giving an account of certain Sufi ideas which were then popular. Interestingly in section 46 of Munis-ul-Qulub titled Panjshukr, he says that a Sufi must thank God on 5 counts

1. He, the almighty and compassionate, brought us from nothingness to existence.
2. He placed us in the animate and not in inanimate category.
3. He created us as human beings and not animals
4. He guided us along the correct path of Islam and
5. He in his profound mercy was pleased to place us among the followers of Muhammad, Peace be on him. Ahmad's Diwan consists of lyrical poetry of general and mystical types.

Some other writers who contributed to Persian literature during the medieval period are

1. Shaikh Hasan was a man of learning and a known sufi of his time. He is said to have died in 1451. he wrote a commentary on Hazrat-i-Khams in Persian and named it Kashif-ul-Asrar.
2. Shaikh Abdul Faiz Qazin bin Ola bin Alam. He is the author of Madan-ul-Asrar. This work deals with the principles and practices of a particular sect of Sufis.
3. Shah Shuaib, a grandson of Abdul Aziz, was the author of Madan-ul-Asfia.
4. Ibrahim Qiwan Faruqi, who lived in the city of Bihar, was the author of Sharaf-Namah, a Persian dictionary. There is a manuscript of it in British museum.
5. Shaikh Hasan Tahi was born in Bihar, though his family hailed from Multan. He went to Delhi during the time of Sultan Sikander Lodi. He died in 1503 and had left a work entitled Miftahul-Faiz.

Bilingual poets

This short section will focus on some important bilingual poets of Bihar.

Persian met the same fate in Bihar which has been the seat of Persian learning. Bilingualism passed here also through three stages. In the first stage we find Makhdoom Shah Sharfuddin Yehya Maneri, Shah Muzaffar Shams Balkhi and Syed Ammad Chirmposh. They are attached to the early period of Bilingualism.

During the regime of Aurangzeb, when prince Azim-ush-shan was posted here as the governor of Bihar, he being the patron of men of letters, poets flocked here from Delhi and Lucknow. This records the golden period of bilingualism, when bilingual poets of high repute flourished here. Abdul Qadir Bedil, Rasikh Azimabadi and Joshish Azimabadi are the renowned poets of this age.

Besides Azimabad, Phulwarisharif, Manersharif and Bihar Sharif are the three important centres of sainthood and scholarship in Bihar. They have produced a galaxy of poets of name and fame. They were mainly mystic poets. They have expressed through their Sufistic poetry, their doctrines and theological ideologies. Sufi Maneri, Josh Maneri and Mashraqui Maneri hail from Manersharif, Sajad Tapan, Taraqqi, Jauhari, Fard and Nasr belong to Phulwarisharif, and Mozaffar Balkhi Ahmad Chirmposh and Naushe Tauheed Balkhi belong to Biharsharif.

Besides, a number of important bilingual poets flourished in different parts of Bihar. Safir Bilgirami, Shafaque Imadi, Syed Fazle Haque Azad, Shaad Azimabadi, Shauque Nimvi and Reyad Hassan Khan Kheyal are worth mentioning. They have made their valuable contribution to the realm of bilingualism.

Syed Ali Shuttari belonged to Azimabad. He was a good poet of both Urdu and Persian. Simplicity in language and lucidity of expression are the marked features of his poetry. Love, especially mysticism was the dominant theme of his poetic work.

Nawab Imdad, Imam born on the 17th of August 1849 at Karai Par Sarai, a village of Patna district, but most period of his life had been spent at Meora, an important village of Bihar. The reputed jurists of India, Sir Ali Imam and Hasan Imam were his sons.

Asar was acquainted with four languages, Urdu, Persian, Arabic and English. His important contributions are 'Kashiful Haqaiq', 'Miratul-Hokamah', 'Kitab-ul-Asmar', 'Kimia-i-Ziraat'. He had a refined taste of poetry. He composed poems both in Urdu and Persian. He has written a few poems in English too. His Urdu Dewan has been published.

Shah Attaur Rahman Kakvi is a poet of contemporary times. From the very inception of his career he began composing poems. Lyrical poetry and Quatrains is the arena of his special efforts. He can write in Urdu as well as in Persian with an equal ease and grace. He has published *Maikhana-i-Taghazzul*, a light collection of the poems of Abdul Qadir Bedil. Besides, he has also edited *Safina-i-Hindi* and *Safina-i-Khusgo*, two *Tadhkirahs* of Bhagwon Das Hindi and Brinda Ban Das Khusgo respectively. He has been always contributing to the standard Urdu journals of India.

Fard was the Pontiff head of *Khanqah-i-Mojibia*, *Phulwarisharif* after the death of his father. He died on 24th Muharram 1255 A.H. by the fatal disease of paralysis and was buried in *Phulwarisharif*. Fard was a reputed scholar of Bihar who wrote a number of Arabic and Persian booklets. From the very childhood he was prone to poetry and his poems have been published in two volumes.

Muzaffar Shams Balkhi has left his work both in prose and poetry. The number of his letters are about 200. Maulvi Abdur Kahman Khan Bihari translated a few letters in Urdu for publications. His poetic collection has been edited by Prof. Syed Hasan and published by the institute under the title of *Majmua-i-Ashar*.

Syed Shah Mohammad Shoib Nayyer belonged to *Azimabad*. He was trained both in Urdu and Arabic. He was prone to poetry from the very beginning. He wrote in Urdu and Persian as well. Besides, a *mathnavi* '*Nawa-i-Din*' is also remembered after him. He wrote a number of books in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. *Tazkira-i-Ulemai Bihar*, *Hyat-i-Fard*, *Jalwa-i-Watan* and *Tazkira-i-Shora-i-Phulwari* are his important contributions.

Thus we can conclude that Bihar cannot be lagged behind in her valuable contribution towards bilingualism. It has enriched this sphere of poetry during all different stages of its development. This definitely shows its talented potentialities to this realm of poetry.

Prose

The religious literature and sacred writings of the medieval Indian Sufis which come frequently under three categories, *Maktubat*, *Malfuzat* and *Tadhkiras* are to be studied not as literary works but primarily as a source of knowledge of our heritage of the past-characteristic culture and traditions, monastic and ethical conceptions. Although the writers lacked scientific outlook and little or no methodology. There is a good deal in them apocryphal Hadith or traditions and legendary stories and anecdotes of Apostolic and saintly patronages of the past. Comparatively speaking, the *Maktubat* provides us with authentic literature produced by eminent Sufis about the mystic creed, theories, principles, doctrines, practices and discipline of Sufism.

The *Malfuzat* and *Tadhkiras* give a catalogue or list of Shaikh and Saints with a collection of their lives and legends, deeds, discourses and spiritual teachings concerning religious duties from Sufism standpoint, and also a set of impressions and views on a variety of subjects expounded impromptu to the audience or visiting devotees, disciples and admirers. But the *Malfuz* genre is not devoid of something of substantial value, and had a place in pious literature, clarifying some outstanding spiritual and mystical issues concerning *Kasb-o-Riyadat* (acquisition by labour and austerity) like *Adhkar* (repeating the names of attributes and praising God). It conveys information of diverse type in simple language without any embellishment or any florid artificial style, and it reflects the ways of thoughts of the Sufi Shaikhs of the age to which it belongs. It gives us of the idea of interaction between alien to which it belongs. It gives us an idea of interaction between alien and indigenous culture and communities, each contributing something to the other, without being influenced so much as to result in loss of individual entity or identity.

Similarly biographies and hagiographies are an important component of prose writing in Persian. To discuss the contribution of Sufi prose writers, I will start with the most revered saint of Bihar, Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri.

Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri

Popularly called as Makhdum-ul-Mulk (The Spiritual master of the whole kingdom). These letters, written throughout the year 1346-47, are addressed to his disciple and the Governor of Chausa (in western Bihar) and were compiled by Zain Badr Arabi. Zain Badr Arabi contributed much to the survival of the genres known as Maktubat and Malfuzat which had been cultivated greatly in 14th century, perhaps much more in Bihar than elsewhere in India.

Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri wrote many letters. In addition to The Hundred Letters, which have been fully and brilliantly translated into English for the first time by Father Paul Jackson. Maneri also wrote a series of two hundred letters many dealing with topics similar to those covered in The Hundred Letters, many dealing with topics similar to those covered in The Hundred Letters, and also a small collection of twenty eight letters addressed to his principal disciple and eventual successor, Muzaffar Shams Balkhi. Preceding The Twenty Eight Letters is an introduction in which it is reported that the Sheikh's correspondence with Muzaffar was confidential and originally consisted of more than two hundred letters sent from Sharfuddin to his beloved disciple over a twenty-five year old period. Muzaffar, however, directed that they were to be buried with him, and only one bundle was "kept apart in a bag", it is they that now comprise The Twenty Eight Letters.³⁴

The Hundred letters are not personal. Makhdum-ul-Mulk gives us no insight into his own spiritual formation or privated states nor is he pointedly polemical. The names of adversaries and friends alike are most often disclosed only by indirection. In his preface, Arabi states clearly that Qazi Shamssuddin, the governor of Chausa in western Bihar, had frequently petitioned Sharfuddin to send him written instructions for his spiritual advancement because many responsibilities prevented him from attending the audiences regularly held in Biharsharif. Sharfuddin Maneri complied with the Qazi's request, writing him a number of letters on various spiritual topics throughout the year A.H. 747 A.D., Zain Badr and others in attendance on the saint copied out these letters and made a collection of

³⁴ Jackson Paul, Sharfuddin Maneri: The Hundred Letters, Khuda Baksh Oriental Library, Patna, Pg.Xiii.

the, which was arranged in the order now presented to the reader. The Hundred Letters rapidly gained fame beyond as well as within the Sufi circles of Bihar. The above mentioned Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq wrote a letter to Sharfuddin, inquiring about some future advice on a point raised in The Hundred Letters. Sharfuddin's reply to the request of the reigning Delhi monarch is still extant, providing dramatic confirmation of the early popularity enjoyed by his correspondence with Qazi Shamsuddin. The Hundred Letters in all parts of the Asian subcontinent ruled and influenced by the Indo-Persian elite through the Mughul period (1526-1857). During the last century, two printed Persian editions were brought out, one in Kanpur, the other in Lahore. In 1908 about 5 percent of the Hundred letters was translated into English at Gaya. In 1973, a complete Urdu rendition appeared in Biharsharif, while in 1976, the first forty letters were published in Bengali from Dacca with the remaining sixty due to be published soon from the same place.

In letter Number 1: Belief in the unity of God, Sharfuddin views that that belief in the unity of God can be divided into four stages. In the first of these a person proclaims "there is no God but God" but his heart is devoid of faith. Such belief is hypocrisy and will prove profitless in the next life. In the second stage a person both proclaims "there is no God but GOD", and believes in his heart that this is so. This type of belief can be either conventional as it is true for ordinary people- or supported by rational proofs as is the case of the learned. This is the way belief normally manifests itself.

The third stage is said to be reached when a person's soul is illuminated in such a way that he is able to perceive every action flowing from a single source and deriving from a single agent. This firm belief is different from the faith of the common people and the faith of the learned, both of which are constricted. This elevates the heart. There is a similar difference between a person who believes that a certain gentleman is in Inn because somebody told him (just as the person of conventional faith inherits what he believes from his father or mother or someone else) and the person who, upon seeing the gentleman's horse and servants at the door of the Inn, infers that the owner himself must be inside. This is the view and belief of the learned, but it contains a great amount of imitation. From the vantage point of someone who has actually seen the man, however, both beliefs are on the same footing, that is they are equally defective. A believer who has attained the third stage

is like the man who actually sees the gentleman in the Inn. He is a Sufi, who, in this stage, sees creatures and experiences the creator, in the sense that he perceives that they all come from him. This very discrimination however indicates that the state of complete unification has not yet been attained.

Sufi masters are of opinion that, in the fourth stage, such a surfeit of the dazzling divine light become manifest to the pilgrim that every single existing particle that lies within his vision becomes concealed in the very luster of that light emanating from the sun. This occurs not because the particles have ceased to exist but rather because the intensity of the sunlight makes it impossible that anything other than this concealment should result. In the same way, it is not true that a person becomes God- for God is infinitely greater than man- nor has the person really ceased to exist, for ceasing to exist is one thing, and becoming lost to view quite another. Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri further views

Before your unique Being, there is neither old nor new:
Everything is nothing, nothing at all! Yet he is what he is.
How then can we remain separate from you?

When “I” and the “You” have passed away, God alone will remain!

Thus in this first letter Maneri, emphasizes on divine grace. Paul Jackson questions this belief saying that it makes it difficult to imagine how anyone could classify the saint from Maner as a monist or pantheist in Islamic garb.³⁵

In his letter Number 9 titled Saintliness, he writes,

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

Dear Brother Qazi Sadruddin, May you be honoured by God! You should know that commonplace saintliness is rooted in faith. Every person who embraces the Muslim faith becomes a member of the congregation of God’s saints! Often, however, there is more than

³⁵ Jackson, Paul, Op.Cit Pg.No.13.

a suspicion that, along with this type of saintliness, there is sin and the commission of forbidden things. There are others who fulfill what is commanded and shun what is prohibited. People doing this should be counted among the saints. The various groups are like squadrons of an army- a special one in front, ordinary troops to the side and a very special one in the centre! These hand-picked troopers not only obey commanded and shun what is prohibited things, they also bring to heel their own desires. Their regard is not on what is due them; instead whatever their friend wants is the very thing they themselves desire! Giving priority to what he wants, they disregard their own desire. They understand what is idolatrous, since they know what the basis of all idolatry is connected with yielding to our own selfish desires. The Quran hints at this when it says: "Have you seen him who makes a God of his own desires?" (Q25:43). Here it is necessary to understand exactly what idolatry is in order to avoid falling into some fault in this matter.

Elaborating on the kinds of Idolatry Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri says, one kind of idolatry is called "manifest"; it occurs when a person substitutes something else for God. This form of idolatry is forbidden by the very principles of the faith. May God preserve us from it. The second type is called "covert"; it occurs when a person considers something other than God as necessary and seizes upon that thing as desirable. Some say that, for Sufis, idolatry is to take note of existence of anything but God! Others say that covert idolatry is tantamount to relying upon oneself in all circumstances, desiring with one's own power, and accepting advice and stratagems in any undertaking that comes up. Such covert idolatry is prohibited by the perfection of divine unity, if not by the explicit principles of the Law!

When I fell into the abyss of your unity,
The thought of no other came to me,
Neither of men nor angels, in your unity;
I, a slave, gazed on you and became free!

Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri was quite a visionary, proceeding further he continues that everyone knows that you need friends if you want to become great! It is fitting that there are groups of the elect, of common people and of those who observe

“command and prohibition”. Beyond these, however, there is a special group worthy of becoming boon companions. And beyond these is the class that is fit for divine secrets. And beyond these comes the group of those on terms of intimate friendship with God. Here, if either party wants anything that belongs to the other, his inclination will be simply to give it, for the mutual usage of goods is such that everything is considered common. In this way, any trace of mistrust departs from them. The venerable Sufis have said “there are commands for common people and matters of license for the elect, since the Prophet himself has condoned the latter”. For example, he said to an Arab who had broken his fast in the month of Ramzan: “Eat and also feed your wife and children! It is lawful for you, but not for anyone else”. This was clearly an abrogation. For ordinary people, he paid attention to the actual extent to which things are commanded or prohibited. For ordinary people, he paid attention to the actual extent to which things are commanded or prohibited. But for foreigners he amended the law, giving them permission to keep some of their customs, even in the face of claims of law and thus showing, in a special way, his friendship towards them. “I am one of that elect who can do as he sees fit with respect to their possessions.”³⁶

Elaborating on the qualities of saints he further explains that a saint should be protected from self-interest; therefore pride does not enter him. and also the absence of desire is the precondition of saints. He says:

As long as anything remains with you, you are in your own essence;
The Kaaba, due to your worship, becomes a tavern!
If anything emanates from your essence, you are still far off:
You are like a temple facing the Kaaba!

Through this letter Maneri wants to focus on the qualities to be required by any person to become a saint. By this letter he is also targeting human ego and self-centered tendencies. For Maneri we can reach God only by the acts of humility and honesty. Without controlling our human urges we can never reach to any place which is nearer to God.

³⁶ Jackson, Paul, Op.Cit. Pg.43.

Letter 22: The Origin of Sufism

In letter number 22, Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri traces the origin of Sufism.

He writes

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate!

Brother Shamssuddin, may God bless you! The foundation of Sufism is quite ancient, having been practiced by the Prophets and the righteous. The fact of the matter is that the predominance of evil habits in our times makes the Sufis themselves appear evil in the eyes of people. Those associated with this tradition are divided into three groups: the Sufis, the Seekers and the Dissemblers. A Sufi is a person who is completely lost to himself, exists only in God, is freed from the hold of his lower self, and is conjoined to the truth of all truths. The seeker is one who engages in the struggle with self, undergoes austerities and disciplines himself by means of various practices. The dissembler is one who for the sake of position and success, makes himself out to be one of the above, but is devoid of any of their qualities. He is also ignorant of them! Despite all this, there is some hope that he might become one of them and, in the shadow of their riches, pass beyond both worlds, becoming a combatant in the army of God and not merely a camp follower.

For Maneri, Adam was the first Sufi. God Almighty drew him forth from clay and placed him in the stage of choice and purity. He prepared a royal edict of vicegerency for retreat, thus becoming the inspiration for novices to undertake this practice. Quoting from Quran (Q3:32), that is, he thoroughly purified him and made him a Sufi. He greatly esteemed the patched garment that he had made from the leaves begged from the trees. At the end of his life, he clothed the Prophet Shish with it and conferred Viceregency upon him. This became the way of Muhammad and the means for conveying the wealth of Sufism to descendants of the Prophets.

Further Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri views that Sufis should be travelers who belong to some group in this world, which they might be able to assemble

for companionship and relate what has occurred to them. Thus the Kaaba made its appearance. It was the very first religious sanctuary. Before that time, there had been no such thing. It appeared in the time, there had been no such thing. It appeared in the time of Adam. All that the Prophet required of the world was a blanket. The prophet Moses himself always wore the blanket that the Prophet Shuiab had conferred on him the first day that he entered his (Shuiab's) service. And this is a very important condition in the way, that there should be a spiritual; guide who clothes the novice with the Sufi garb. Jesus always used to wear a woolen garment. Similarly, both Moses and Jesus themselves built Jerusalem as place of spiritual trust. Then, in every country and region Sufis built meeting places for themselves and fixed abodes for periods of solitude where they could practice inner converse with God. Fellow travelers could also come there and recount the traditions of the exalted, divine secrets. When the time for the foremost of the Prophets and the King of the saints, the blessed Muhammad- may the peace of God be upon him and his family- arrived, he himself donned such a blanket. "It was the practice of your father Abraham" (Q22:78). He also yearned for the religious sanctuary of the Kaaba. The pride of the world set aside a special corner in his own mosque and from his companions he selected a group of about seventy people who were travelers on the path. They used to converse together, while the Arab chiefs and ordinary people were not allowed to enter that space. When the pride of the world bestowed great honour and dignity upon any of the companions, he would give him his own cloak or shirt. That person would then become a Sufi.

Thus the beginning of becoming a Sufi began with Adam and its completion was found in Muhammad, the apostle of God. It remains in the midst of believers and their community. It requires strength of heart, above all else. One should not pay too much attention to one's unworthiness, for this particular work is dependent on *the* divine favour and grace, not on the actions of any person! It means that much is depended upon God's will too. He knows how to use his pious disciples for the service of humanity.

Letter Number 97: Death

In letter number 97 Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri talks extensively about the reality and essence of death. He writes 'Dear Brother Shamshuddin,

men are of three kinds. The first are covetous and greedy, the second have begun to turn to God, and the third have attained the heights of mystical knowledge. Pleasure-prone people simply do not think about death and even if they do, it is in order to pine for this world and to become further engrossed in its good things. The remembrance of death makes such a person move further away from God. A person who has begun to turn towards God thinks about death as a means of producing fear and dread in his heart and thus be enabled to turn completely towards him. It often happens that he has a great aversion to death out of fear that it might come before he has turned fully towards God and prepared the provisions necessary for it. Such a person would be excused for such an aversion, and would not come under this threst: "Anyone who has despised the vision of God Almighty does not rest in his favour". This is because he does not abhor death and the divine visage, but rather is afraid of losing that very sight on account of some fault of his. It is like a person who delays seeing his beloved and remains engrossed in making preparations to meet her at the time and place that will be most to his liking. He does not bother to make a count of the labour involved in such preparation. The sigh of his friendship is that he is always making some effort on her behalf, and is not preoccupied with anybody else.

The advanced Sufi is forever recalling death, for it is the time appointed for seeing the countenance of the friend, and no lover can ever forget the time fixed for meeting his beloved. he would love to be swallowed up by death so that, being freed from this dwelling place of sinners, he might rise to the abode near his friend, just as Huzaifa relates: "O God, you know that I prefer poverty to riches, sickness to health, and death to life. Make death easy for me, that I might arrive at my reward- You"! Now it will be understood why the novice is excused for shunning death and for desiring it, while, on the other hand, the advanced Sufi is also excused- for loving death and yearning after it! It is said however, that there is an even higher stage than both of these, when a person makes use of nothing at all. But does his work purely for the sake of God. For himself, he chooses neither death nor life. This is a stage of resignation and acceptance, and it is the final point of those who have reached the summit.

This letter emphasizes the inevitability of death in a beautiful manner. Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri says:

O brother, the end of one and all is by this way alone, whether you are a beggar or a king, for here it is all the same with respect to the possessions of kings and the poverty of beggars, as has been said:

If your possessions were to stretch from earth to the moon,
Finally, they would all lead to this door!
When your law suddenly turns rigid,
Then all the world's wealth is no more than a chin!
If you are a faridun or an Afrasiyab,
In this ocean you are but a drop!

Bringing out equality in terms of death to all humans irrespective of their religion, caste and creed he sums up by saying

All the creatures of this world are submerged in an ocean of blood:
Who knows what their condition is like beneath the dust?

Maktubat-i-Do Sadi

A second collection of 152 letters on similar Sufistic points as the first compiled by the same Zain Badr-i-Arabi, twenty two years after, in 1328 and addressed to a greater number of people than the first has been sometimes named as Maktubat-i-Do Sadi. The manuscript copy of Khudabaksh Library, Patna, contains the additional 40 letters and the compilers name given in it is 'Mohammad Bin Isa-al-Balkhi'. There is another copy of this work in the Balkhi Khanqah of Fatuba (Patna district). There is a third collection of letters on Sufi topics, called 'Maktubat-i-Seh Sadi' and published in Lahore, but the number of letters in it are less than three hundred, and the first two hundred are the same as in the second collection. The additional letters include one addressed to Sultan Mohammad Bin Tughlaq, sent in reply to one of his own. The fourth collection of twenty eight letters, called Maktubat-i-Bist-o-Hasht has been referred to above. The cataloger of India office library wrongly ascribes two other sets of letters, one to the great saint, and the other to his

father which he names 'Maktubat-i-Hazrat Yahya Maneri'. The names of the addresses given appear to have had little or no connection with the great saint of Bihar.

As for the Malfuzat, Lataif-i-Mani is an abridged version of Madan-ul-Mani. A supplement to the latter Khan-i-Pur-N'mat, compiled by Zain Badr-i-Arabi, contains the discourses delivered between 15 Shaban, 749=November, 9, 1348, and the end of Shawwal, 751 December 1350. Besides mystic matters, it contains some valuable information of cultural interest. Ganj-i-La-Yafna and Tuhfa-i-Ghaini containing the discourses of the years 760=1358 and 770=1368 were compiled by Zain-Badr-i-Arabi. The undated Mukh-ul-Ma'ni which gives us the discourses of 51 majlis was compiled by Syed Shihabuddin Halifi. He was the compiler of Maghzul-Ma'ni also which has been divided into 33 (fasals). The contents of both were checked and verified by the saint at the request of the compiler.

Bahrul-Ma'ni also called Kanz-ul-Ma'ni, which relates to the period between Shaban, 757=July 1356, and Safar, 760=1360-61 were compiled by the same Zain Badr-i-Arabi while Munis-ul-Muridin covering the discourses of 21 majlis from Muharram to Shaban, 775 (June 1372 to January, 1373), was compiled by Salah Makhliis Daud Khani, a devoted disciple of the saint. Among other things these Malfuzat contain some new points of historical interest. Other less known Malfuzat includes Asbab-ul-Najat and Mirat-ul-Muhaqqiqin. The widely used Rahat-ul-Qulub which was the last compilation of Zain is a short tract containing about twenty pages. It gives some account of what the great Saint said and did in his last ten Majlis, shortly before his death, on 6 Shawal 782=January 4, 1381.

The books from the pen of Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri are easily available include such tracts as Irshad-ul-talibin (also called Burhan-ul-Arifin), Irshad-us-Salikin, Risala-i-Makki, which deal with the seeker of God, unityism and spiritual practices of Dhikr and Muraqaba respectively and three sets of 'Aurad', big middling and small, (prayer exercises). Aqaid-i-Sharafi is also a book of prayer and it also deals with mystic beliefs, and Fawaid-ul Muridin contains religious and moral instructions for the followers. The *very title of 'Risala-i-Wujudia'* is suggestive of its contents. Fawaid-

i-Rukni and Ajwaba-i-Zahidi, though small are important treaties, the first being written in response to a request for mystic instructions of a pilgrim to Mecca, Haji Rukmuddin Zair-ul-Harammain, and the other containing replies in simple and easily intelligible language to a set of 40 or more questions of Sufistic import raised by different devotees.

Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri's Isharat-i-Sharafia contains 36 short letters of which each letter is concerned with the Sufi idea of 'Wahdat-ul-Wujud' or unity of being. Six of the letters were addressed to Mirdad, who has probably given his name to a mohalla which still exists in Biharsharif and four are in the names of "Shabaz alias Gorakh"

Maneri's numerous works especially his Maktubat and Shar-i-Abad-ul Muridin, has written in great details and in a easy language with convincing arguments.

The standard work on Sufism of Bihar is said to be of a voluminous 'Sharah' or commentary, spread over 453 folios, with 19 lines to a page, on a well known Arabic treatise, Adab-ulMuridin, by Shaikh Ziauddin Abun Najib Abdul Azhir Suharwardi, the uncle of the celebrated Shihabuddin Suharwardi, who died in 563=1167 and 532=1234-35 respectively. The commentary was begun at the request of Qazi Ashraf in Rabi, I, 765=December, 1363, and finished in Dhilhijja 766=August, 1364. Some marginal notes (Hashia) on this commentary, largely used in Bihar are from the pen of the 18th century scholar and logician, Qazi Ghulam Yahya of Barh.

Muzzafar Shams Balkhi, who had given up his professional job In Firoz Shah Tughlaq's Arabic college, situated in Khuski-i-Lal, at Delhi, to become the disciple of Sharfuddin Of Bihar, shunned all worldly things, gave away in charity all that came into his hands, including his valued books, used knots instead of needle and tread to mend his torn clothes, tied his 'Izar' or trousers with 'munj' string, and divorced his wives and himself married them with others whenever he found that his growing affection for them was likely to affect his love and devotion to God and yet he was on terms of correspondence not only with the Shaikhs and Ulemas and common people but also officials, nobles and a king of Bengal, as we find from his Voluminous Maktubat containing 181 letters. His Sharh-i-

Mashriq-ul-Anwar, a standard work on Tradition, Sharh-i-Aqida-i-Hafizia, and a small Diwan of mystic poems, have been preserved for posterity.

Another learned Sufi who contributed to Persian prose was Husain Muiz whose Malfuz titled Ganj-i-La Yakhfa contains the discourses of 57 Majlis, his Maktubat consisting of 154 letters on mystic *subjects* including one addressed to Ibrahim Shaqi of Jaunpur, a treatise in Arabic named Hazarat-i-Khams (5 different planes of existence) on the problem of divine unity, and his collection of mystic poems, including a Mathnavi entitled Chahar Darwesh, are more generally known, but the Fatuha Khanqah of the Balkhis has some other works also such as Risala-i-Muhammadia, Aurad-i-Dah, Fasli, Risala-i-Tauhid, and Risala-i-Akhasy-ul-Khas. His mosque and tomb are located in Paharpur in Bihar Sharif where he died in 844=1440.

Husain's son Shaikh Hasan Balkhi (dated, 1451 A.D.) wrote small tracts such as Risala-i-Ma'ni-dhat-Wajh-o-Nafs, Risala-i-Hast, and was the compiler of Lataef-ul-Ma'ni, but his most well known work is Kashif-ul-Asrar, a commentary in Persian of his father's Arabic Risala. Hasan's son and successor, Ahmad Langar Dariya was also an eminent saint, a good scholar and a poet with a small Diwan to his credit. He is more well known because of his valuable Mulfuz, Munis-ul-Qulub which contains a vast information about the saints of Firdausia order. This Mulfuz supplements the earliest works such as Manaqib-ul-Asfia, Mulfuz of Maulana Amun, and Risalai-Bahram Bihari and it amplifies the references in them and gives additional information of historical and cultural value.

Zain Badr Arabi

He was a dear disciple of Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri. He contributed much to the survival of the genres known as Maktubat and Malfuzat which had been cultivated greatly in the fourteenth century, perhaps much more in Bihar than anywhere else. However Zain was a learned scholar of the medieval period. He often described himself as 'Dast Girafta' (protégé, helper, assistant) of the Makhdum. He also called himself as Bicharah-i-miskin (poor helpless one) and Gada-i-Zhandah posh (beggarly, clothed in rags).

Zain Badr Arabi was a gifted person and a man of learning and also a poet as is evident from the few verses, couplets and Qita'hs which we find under the poetical pen name of Zain in the prefatory portions or colophons of the Malfuzat like Tuhfa-i-Ghaibi, Bahr-ul-Maan'I, Ganj-i-La-Yafna and Khwan-ipur Nimat.

The poetical compilations of Zain are much too scarce to give him the epithet of a major or a perfect poet. The few verses we have from him do not appear to be of higher order as those in the Diwans, big or small of the first four Balkhi saintly disciples, scholars and poets of Bihar. The full list of the works, rich and unique in mystic literature, produced by the Makhdum and compiled by Zain has not come down to us. The themes and thought contents of the letters which flowed from the pen of the Makhdum with the names of the addresses and with characteristic headings could be easily put together and copied out, ofcourse after getting the permission, so as to be offered to a wider circle of people, present and future.

The first and by far the most detailed Malfuz, compiled by Zain was *Mad'in-ul-Maani (mines of meanings)* of which the printed text consists of 500 pages, is divided into 65 chapters, called Babs covers the period of the forties upto Shaban, 746 A.H. the copy is marred by certain interpolations. The letters in the collection known as *Maktubat-i-Sadi* start from 747 A.H. *Khwan-i-Pur Ni'mat* is divided into 47 Majlises, is the second and supplementary volume. It is of small size and contains the discourses of the Makhdum from 15 Shaban 749 to the end of Shawwal of 751. he has dealt with at greater strength about the format and technique adopted in compiling his malfuzats.

Ganj-i-La Yafna (imperishable treasure) contains the discourses from Rabi 1st Sunday 2 to Safar 1 Wednesday 7, 751 A.H. *Mulfuz-us-Safar*, probably the 7th compiled by Zain was the collection of Safar and succeeding months upto Jamadi 2 of 762 A.H.

Zain Badr Arabi immensely contributed on setting down on paper the teaching discourses of his spiritual master on a variety of subjects which were not confined to law (Shariat) and the path (Sufi way of Tariqat) but what embraced many mundane matters, considered from Sufis view point. Sometimes the clarity of expression found in the

Makhdum's own letters (example, Makhtubat-i-Sadi) is lacking in the reports on various questions and answers related in Mulfuzat such as Khwan-i-Pur Ni'mat.

Prof. S.H.Qasmi of Delhi university writes about literary contribution of Sufis in Bihar in an article titled "A short survey of Persian literature in Bihar" in Sayed Athar Sher compiled book on contribution of Bihar to Arabic, Persian and Islamic Learning. According to him, Fariyad was a good poet of Persian who apart from composing Ghazals and Qasidas was more interested in Mathnavi form of Persian poetry. The contemporary and later biographers have recognized the art of versification of Faryad. He was considered to be the most learned and most influential member of the Muslim community.

Saadi occupies a place unsurpassed so far in the history of Persian literature. His ghazals, Bustan and Gulistan have always invited the attention of poets and scholars to imitate them. Very few have dared to imitate Saadi's style in Gulistan and Bustan. Throughout the 19th century none other than Faryad could think of doing so. His Dabistan-i-Akhlaq on the model of Bustan of Saadi is a successful attempt in this direction

گزین یادگاری ز بندوستان

نگارم یکی نامه چون بوستان

کنم مسلکِ شیخ را پیروی

جانا که در نظم این مثنوی

Apart from these two poets there are a number of other poets who were either born in Bihar or settled down here for some or another reason.

Khwaja Talib Ali Khan pen-named Sultan and better known as Khwaja Sultan Jan, son of Khwaja Husain Ali Khan was among the nobles of Azimabad. He was well conversant with music and composed poetry in Persian and Urdu. He passed away in 1272 A.H.

Like many Indian men of letters settled down in Bihar during this century and served the cause of Persian literature, Iranians also found it congenial to stay at Bihar during this century and served the cause of Persian literature. Such an Iranian is Ahmad

Bin Muhammad Ali Bin Muhammad Baqar Isfahani better known as Bahbahani. Born at Kirmanshah In 1777 he came to India in 1787-88, and traveled widely throughout India. Like his ancestors as Mir Baqar Majlisi, he was a reputed scholar of Shia theology. He wrote a number of treatises on the subject. After visiting Hyderabad, Calcutta, Azimabad, Faizabad, Lucknow, Murshidabad and Jahangirnagar (Dhaka), he finally settled down at Azimabad-i-Jahan Numa. Most of them are of religious nature which he wrote at different places in India.

Mira't-ul-Ahwal-i-Jahan Numa is the most important and useful work of Bahbahani. In this work he gives an account of his forefathers and his own life and travels. It is divided into five chapters called as matlabs in the work. The chapters dealing with the authors impression of India, history of European nations, especially the British and their conquest of India, Indian customs, way of life and the contemporary political history are interesting and important for a historian and sociologist alike. He writes for Basant, a festival of spring:

قبل از نورور سلطانی، نیک ماه می شود و بزرگان مجلس خود را برنگ زرد آریند و
عامه خلائق تمام اخوت خود را زرد کنند و بیک دیگر تهنیت و مبارکباد گویند- این نیز
درمیان مسلمانان اندک رواجی گرفته است-

Holi, ramlila, and Dushera festivals were described. An account of the Wahabis adds to the importance of the work.

Mohammad Reza pen-named Najm, son of Abdul Qasim Tabataba entitled like his father as Najm-ud-Daulah Iftexharul Mulk Hussain Jung is another prolific writer of this age. His forefathers came to India from Isfahan during the reign of Bahadurshah and followed the fortunes of Safdar Jung and his sucesors, the Nawab of Awadh. From the author's own account in his Naghma-i-Andalib, it is derived that he was born in Patna where his father served as Naibs of Bihar. He was a pupil of Nizamuddin Mamnum and left Diwans in Persian and Urdu which, unfortunately are not traced now. However a number of his prose works are available in different libraries. Elliot and Riece inform us that Reza

composed a voluminous work entitled Bahr-i-Zakhkhar comprising the following volumes on different subjects:

و مفاتیح الرياست و نغمہ عندلیب و اخبارات ہند و مجمع الملوك و منظر العالم و مظاہر الادیان

Whom he wrote Tarikh-i-Muzaffari. Apart from this history, he compiled a work on the history of the prophets. Neither the title nor the details of the work could be known from another source. Bahr-i-Mawwaj is another work of Muhammad Ali. It is a comprehensive and useful work on the general history of India.

Farzand Ali of Munger is another historian of the period from Bihar. He wrote Mulakhkhasut Tawarikh, a general history of India, at the instance of some of his friends. It is actually of some his friends. It is actually an abridgement of the Siyar-ul-Mataakhkherin of Ghulam Ali Khan. The language of this abbringement is easy and the insertion of verses in the course of narration of the events indicates not only the authors interest in his attempt but also his convergence to poetry. Farzand Ali's remarks about this his present venture that he had studied Siyarul Muta'akhkherin, the unrivalled composition of Ghulam Ali Khan since the work has many merits and advantages, rarely found in any other work in history, it has ever been dear to him. But its extreme prolixity not only demands a long time for its perusal, but exhausts the patience of readers.

Alimirza, son of Mirza Abu Talib belonged to Delhi but he migrated to Azimabad. He composed poetry under the pen name Maftun as this meqta shows

بکشا لب بدعایش مفتون کہ دہد ذائقہ شہد بکام

Zubdatul Akhbar Fi Sawanehul Asfar, a rare and valuable account of a journey of the author to Meca, contains a number of Muftuns, Qasidas and stray verses. This travelogue is dedicated to Wazir Aminuddin Nasir Jung. This is a day to account of the said journey for which Mirza Abu Talib departed from Azimabad on 8 th Rabiuth Thani (1825-6 A.D.). the description of Calcutta, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina and the tombs and other

places of sanctity is indeed important and interesting. It is divided. It is divided into three muhits, each subdivided into several Anhars. The second Muhit of this work is quite interesting for a student of Iranian history, culture and archaeology. While returning from his pilgrimage, the author visited some Iranian cities like Meshhad, Shiraz, and gave an account of the men of letters of Iran whom the author chanced to meet in the course of his travel there. This travelogue of Abu Talib occupies a unique place. Most probably it is the only account of journey to take by an Indian scholar throwing a flood of light on the then Iranian life. For the language and the style of its prose, some lines are being quoted here from the description of Teheran in this travelogue.

باید دانست که منزل اول تهران، کز است، بفتح اول و سکون ثانی- شارعش در ابتدا خورده ناهموار، مشتمل بر جد اول و انهار و لطف سبزه زار- قریه محقری دارد- تقریباً دو ساعتی از شب گذشته بر براط شاه عباس علیه الرحمه که بالاتر دیه است، در نهایت رفعت و متانت و استحکام و وسعت، رسیده قیام نمود- مایحتاج مسافر وجوده گاه قاطر، ارذالان دارد که مراد از مستحفظ رباط است، بهم رسیده دم در آن جاریه ایست چاهی که آبش خیلی بد مزه و شور است و در مصرف طبخ نمی آید- لکن اغلب قوافل طهرانی همین جابار می اندازند-

Tazkirah writing is an important aspect of Persian literature. During the period in review, at least three tazkiras of Persian poets, prose writers and Indian saints were written by scholars from Bihar.

Agha Mohammad Quli Khan Ashiqi of Patna has left Nishtari-Ishq for the posterity which is an extensive biography of one thousand four hundred and seventy Persian poets from Rudaki to the authors time. It is arranged in alphabetical order. Ashiqui spent eight years in collecting material from numerous historical and political works. After this spade work, he conceded his Tazkira in 1809 and completed it on Tuesday, the 13th Rajab, 1817-18. it is important to note that Nishtar-i-Ishq is a useful source for having a detailed account of some of the contemporary poets. Still it is strange that the author's native place, like Ulfati, Ibrati etc have not been mentioned.

Syed Mir Wazir Ibrati is the other Tazkira writer of this period. He compiled two Tazkiras mainly Meraj-ul-Khayal and Riyaz-ul-Afkar. Ibrati was a popular literary figure of his time. Though born at Badh district in Patna, he lived at Patna. He passed his life serving different personalities in different capacities.

Ibrati was a popular literary figure of his time. Though born at Badh district in Patna, he lived in Patna. He passed his life serving different personalities in different capacities. He left a number of works. The available works of him can be classified under the topics like grammar, religion and ethics, Tazkira, stories, letters, and commentaries. Apart from them he is said to have composed two works on history. One of them was an account of the visit of Nepal's ruler to Patna. Along with a description of the city. Prof. Hasan Askari exhibited it on the occasion of the History conference held at Patna. Its is unfortunately not traced now. The second work of Ibrati on history is Jam-i-Jahan Numa written in 1266|1850 A.D. which is a history of India from the arrival of Europeans in India upto their occupation of the country.

Merajul-khyal is a biography of two hundred and five poets. Mostly those who flourished during the 18th and 19th centuries of the Christian era in India. It is divided into 28 sections and arranged alphabetically. Ibrati completed it in 1841 A.D. but additions were made to upto 1848.

Riyaz-ul-afkar is another Tazkira of Ibrati. It is a biography of one hundred and one Persian prose writers who belonged particularly to seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of Christian era. In the light of the present information, it is, most probably, the only work of its kind composed during this century in India. It was completed in 1851-52 A.D. for Ghalib he writes in the Tazkira, that only this much could be obtained of him that he has a style of his own in poetry and prose.

Apart from these Tazkiras of poets and prose writers Mohd. Abdul Hayaz Qadri Jaffery Phulwarvi, compiled a biography of forty five saints of Bihar, mostly belonging to the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It was completed in 1833 in one easy language and simple style. The author quotes Abu Turab who narrated to him the account of some of

the Shaiks. A number of Indian tales have been rendered into Persian in India. Among them is Nal daman which is a Persian version of an Indian story made by Faizi. It is important to note that no rendering of the story is, however, traced after Faizi upto the nineteenth century. The credit of its second rendering into Persian prose goes to Ibrati of Azimabad who completed it in 1831-2 A.D. under the title of I'jazul Mohabbat. The importance of Ibrati's 'I'jazul Mohabbat lies in the fact that it is the only extended reproduction of the story in Persian.

Hazrat Maulana Hussain Nausha Tauheed Balkhi , popularly known as Nausha Tauheed was born in Zafrabad, Jaunpur in 745 AH. He was brought up under the guidance of Hazrat Makhdum- e-Jahan Sharfuddin Ahmad Yahya Meneri (RA). According to Muannisul Qulub, he was a blue eyed disciple of Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri. Similarly, Maulana Hussain Nausha was also very much attached to his spiritual guide. Nausha died in 844 AH and was buried in Biharsharif.

The author of 'Bihar through Ages' in his note on the life and works of Hazrat Nausha gives following account of the literary contributions made by Hazrat Hussain Nausha description:

Hussain has left eight works including letters and poems. Hussaain composed a treatise in Arabic on the mystical topic Wahdatut Wajood (the unity of existence). And named it ' Hazrat Khams'. This treatise was translated into Persian by his son under the title Kashiful Asrar and was lithographed at Patna in 1986."

The abovementioned description shows that he was acquainted with prose and poetry writing. As far as his writing goes he also used very simple words and terminologies to express his feelings. His main motive was to make a larger audience aware of the principles of Shariat and Tariqat. The author of "Bihar Ke Farasi Suf Go Shoara" in his description on Hazrat Nausha says that Nausha had 132 Maktubat to his credit; however none of them is available in published form³⁷. Besides these Maktubat, a resalah (treatise) was also written by him in Arabic which was titled Hazrat-e Khams. The treatise was later

³⁷ Syed Qayamuddin Nizami Qadri, Tazkira-e-Sufiya-e-Bihar page 100

translated by his son under the title Kashiful Asrar. The author of Tazkira e Sufia –e- Bihar gives a list of eleven compilations associated with his name which is as follows:

1. Hazrat e Khams
2. Resalah-e- Qaza-e- Qadar
3. Resala e tauheed e Khas
4. Resala e tauheed e Akhsul Khwas
5. Resala e Zikra e wajud e Awwal headyat aan wa bayan e marefat e Alam wa niyabat e Aan
6. Resala dar bayan Hasht cheez Zat wa jehat wa nafs wa sifat wa Asma wa af'al wa surat e Jaamia wa surate esurate Mutaferriqa bar sabeel e Tauzeeh wa tashreeh bar Istelah e muwahhedan
7. Auraddiddahe Fasli
8. Ganj e Yakhfi
9. Maktubat
10. Ijazat Nama Banam Maulana Hasan Balkhi
11. Diwan e Farasi

Hazrat Makhdoom Shah Shoaib Firdausi: was a cousin of Hazrat Shaikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yahya Maneri (RA) and was born at Kajawan in 688 AH. He spent most of his time in the sheikhpura area of Munger in Bihar. It is said that Islam spread in this area by the efforts of Hazrat Makhdoom Shah Shoaib Firdausi only. He and his disciples (read successors) founded a huge Madarsa in Sheikhpura which became a great seat of learning and preaching Islam. Hazrat Makhdoom Shah Shoaib Firdausi wrote a book entitled 'Munaqabat ul Asfia'. The book contains the life history and Manaqbaat of various Sufis belonging to the Firdausi Order. It gives a description of the life history starting from Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH) and includes the history of all Firdausi saints till the time of Muzaffar Shams Balkhi (RA). 'Munaqabat Asfia' is considered to be the oldest source of the history of Firdausi Order.

Syed Shah Farzand Ali Firdausi Maneri (RA)

He was born in 1253 AH/ 1838 AD in Maner Sharif. He received his basic education in Maner Sharif. He had great inclination towards Sufi learning and had read all the Maktubat and Malfuzat of Hazrat Sheikh Sharfuddin Ahmad Yehya Maneri (RA). Apart from his interest in Sufi learning he was also very well versed with calligraphy. He was a bilingual writer contributing both in Urdu and Persian languages. His Persian works include Usool e Takbeer and Sirre Dostan which are published whereas Musstalahat ul Mutasawwafeen and KhamKhane have not yet been published.

Through this chapter we can conclude that the Mystic Sufi saints of Bihar had written in great details the methods and practices of Sufism along with spreading the message of Humanity, Universal Brotherhood and Peace to the people.

CONCLUSION

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I am a student of language, literature and Culture and I believe that these three factors are very crucial in the shaping of civilization of any society. Also being a student of Persian, I wanted to focus on an area on which there is not enough literature available in English. Also coming from Darbanga district of Bihar, from my childhood I grew up on the rich folklore and stories of Sufi Saints. All these factors contributed to choose this topic of the contribution of Sufism on the development of Persian language in Bihar.

Persian, the more widely used name of the language in English, is an Anglicized form derived from Latin *Persianus*, Hellenized form of Old Persian *Parsa*. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term *Persian* seems to have been first used in English in the mid-16th century. Native Persian speakers call it "Pârsi" (local name) or *Fârsi*. *Farsi* is the arabicized form of *Pârsi*, due to a lack of the 'p' phoneme in Standard Arabic.

The Islamic conquest of Persia marks the beginning of the new history of Persian language and literature. This period produced world class Persian language poets and the language served, for a long span of time, as the lingua franca of the eastern parts of Islamic world and of the Indian subcontinent. It was also the official and cultural language of many Islamic dynasties, including Samanids, Buyids, Tahirids, Ziyarids, the Mughal Empire, Timurids, Ghaznavid, Seljuq, Khwarezmids, Safavid, Afsharids, Zand, Qajar, Ottomans and also many Mughal successor states such as the Nizams etc.

For five centuries prior to the British colonization, Persian was widely used as a second language in the Indian subcontinent. It took prominence as the language of culture and education in several Muslim courts in South Asia and became the sole "official language" under the Mughul emperors. Coinciding with the Safavid rule over Iran, when royal patronage of Persian poets was curtailed, the centre of Persian culture and literature moved to the Mughul empire, which had huge financial resources to employ a veritable army of Persian courtly poets, lexicographers and other literati. Beginning in 1843, though English replaced Persian on the subcontinent. Evidence of Persian's historical

influence can be seen in the extent of its influence on the languages of the Indian subcontinent, as well as the popularity that it still has in this region.

Sufism was a common appellation of all Muslims who wanted to attain knowledge of, get nearer to, and find union with God, through certain spiritual experiences and devotional exercises and not by mere observance of empty rituals and outward formalities. As a Muslim, a Sufi believes in the Unitarian God of the Quran, saying there is no God but God or but one God, the lord of the world and not a God of any particular nation, but he also attempts to reconcile it with pantheistic unification which implies that there is nothing but God.

Indian languages owe much to the Sufis, in their quest for a means of communication with the local people; they used local dialects and languages in their sermons and writings. They helped the evolution and enrichment of various Indian languages such as Urdu, Khariboli, Punjabi, Gujarati, Sindhi and Telugu.

Firstly of I explained the main tenets and various aspects of Sufism and Sufi literature. After understanding the concept of Sufism, I proceeded further to analyze the various debates on the origin of Sufism.

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The distinctive characteristics of Sufis have been love, liberalism, latitudinarianism and eclecticism. The main aim of a Sufi is to attain the one reality diffused over the universe. A Sufi considers human life as a journey and himself as a traveler (Salik), a seeker of God. He sets out in the quest of God by slow stages (Manzil or Maqamat), the first of which is humanity (Nasut) in which he must live by action confirming to the

cannon law (Shariat) and percepts and practices of Islam. The second stage is considered to be angelic in nature (Malakut) which he reaches by keen perception and meditation and through the pathway of purity (Tariqat). The third stage is passing through power by requisitioning the aid of knowledge or Gnosis (Marifat), he attains the truth of reality (Haqiqat) which is the stage of Lahut (absorption in divinity). Hafiz says “Miyan-i-ashiq-o-mashuq hech ha'il neest: tu khud hijab-i-khudi hafiz az meyan barkhez” (Nothing stands between the lover and the beloved. You are your own curtain, oh hafiz! remove that). Annihilation or self effacement (Fana) does not imply the end of the Sufi 'ways' for it leads to eternal abiding in God (Baqā bad-al-fana)

Sufism went through considerable development and modification as the Muslims came into contact with people of other races and cultures in course of their history. Consequently, what came to be known as Sufism later on must be distinguished from what Sufism was in its early days. When we look at some early writers of the first and second|seventh and eighth centuries for example Quashiri and Hujwiri we find their understanding of Sufism.

The main Sufi orders of India are, established by distinguished Sufi Saints like the Qadriya from Abdul Qadri Jilani, Naqshbandi from Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband, Chisti from Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, and Suharwardi from Khwaja Shahabuddin Shaharwardi. Several other orders were later founded. The main orders named here dominated the Islamic World for many centuries. Each order contributed immensely in the spread and development of Islam. The earliest Sufis of Bihar consisted of the Chisti order, some of the earliest being Shah Mahmud Bihari and Saiyid Taju'd Din of Danapur, the disciples of Qutbu'd Din Bakhtiyar Kaki (d 633-1235), Maulana Ali Bihari, a disciple of Baba Farid Ganj-i-Shakar(d.644-1246), Makhdum Adam Sufi (d 686-1287), son of Saiyid Ibrahim Chisti, of which later became Hajipur (d.657-1258) and his son, Makhdum Hamidu'd Din(d.771-1369) and the latter's son, Taimullah Sufaid Baz (D.790-1388) the spiritual guide of Shaikh Faidullah of Kurji near Patna (d.831-1427); Shamsu'd Din of Chandhan's (Biharsharif) (d.820-1418).

Some of the prominent Sufis of Suhrawadi order were Shaikh Jalal Tabrizi, one of the chief disciples of the celebrated author of 'Awarifu'l-Ma'arif, Shihabu'd Din Suhrawadi, came to Bihar via Delhi and Badaun, and from there he went to Bengal and Sylhet where his Chilla Khana is still found and who is also known as Sharfuddin Maneri. Maulana Taqiu'd Din Suhrawadi of Mahsun (Dinajpur, Bengal), the author of Multaqit which is an abridged version of Ghazzali's Ihyau'l 'Ulum, Taqlu'd Din was the inspirer of many Suhrawadi saints of Bihar, including Makhdum Yahya Maneri, the father of the celebrated Firdausi saint, Makhdum Sharfu'd-Din Maneri.

After analyzing the main concepts related to Sufism I, discussed the prominent Sufis of Bihar and analyze their Persian works. The focus was on the main orders of Sufism in Bihar and also it explores the tenets and visions of these various orders.

Persian poets of Bihar were influenced by Sufi school of thought. Sharfuddin Maneri, Ahmed Chirmposh, Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, Abul Hassan Fard, Md. Ali Habib Nasr, Sufi Maneri and a number of other Sufi poets of Bihar expressed their mystic experiences through Persian poetry. They have left behind valuable records of their precious thoughts and attitudes towards life. Mysticism has been the dominant note in the Persian poetry of Bihar in general and Sufistic poetry in particular.

Maner, Phulwarisharif and Azimabad were important locations for Sufis. Phulwarisharif has been an important seat of Persian learning. Shah Abdul Hasan Fard and Md. Habib Nasr hailed from this place. They belonged to the lineage of Hazrat Tajul Arfin Peer Mojibullah. They have left behind their Persian diwan and a number of treatises dealing with different theological problems. In poetry they have expressed their Sufistic experiences and mystic thoughts through their works.

We had an overview of almost all Sufi orders of highest repute, the Chistia, Suharwardiya, Firdausia, Qadriya and Madariya were represented in Bihar, and each had a great share in the spread and development of Islam in the area. Among the earliest to come to Bihar were the Sufis of the Chistiya order. The earliest were Shah Mahmud

Bihari and Saiyid Tajud Din of Danapur, the disciples of Qutbu'd Din Baktiyar Kaki, Maulana Ali Bihari, Makhdum Adam Sufi and his son Makhdum Hamiddin.

Bihar also self the influence of the Suhrawardi order. Shaikh Jalal Tabrizi, one of the chief disciples of the celebrated author of 'Awarifu'l-Maarif, Shihabud'Din Suhrawardi, came to Bihar via Delhi and Badaun and from there he went to Bengal and Sylhet where his Chilla Khana is still found. Maulana Ahmad Damishqi, one of the Khalifas of the celebrated Bahau'd Din Zakariya Multani was the spiritual guide of Maulana Taqiu'd Din Suhrawardi of Mahsun (Dinajpur, Bengal), the author of Multaqit which is an abridged version of Ghazzali's Ihyaul 'Ulum, Tauqiud Din was the inspirer of many Suhrawardi saints of Bihar including Makhdum Yahya Maneri, the father of the celebrated Firdausi saint, Makhdum Sharfussin Maneri.

The Chistiya and Suhrawardia were eclipsed in the early medieval period by the Firdausia and the Shuttaria, both offshoots of the latter. The most dominant Sufi orders in Bihar, which eclipsed all others and which left a considerable mystic literature behind by Makhdum Sharfuddin and his Balkhi disciples and followers, Maulana Muzaffar, his nephew, Husain Muiz, and the latter's son and grandson Hasan, and Ahmad Langar Dariya.

I analyzed the role of Sufis in the socio-religious history of Bihar in the latter section of the thesis. Here, I had discussed as how Islam is not just a historic religion but also a social creed. It had its own concept of society, particular type of social order, a certain outlook in life, and a religious ideology which with its ethical and moral law and code of conduct, and above all its strong and monotheistic belief in the unity of God, constitutes its philosophy. The Sufis of Bihar not only emphasized the egalitarian basis of its social order, equality and brotherhood, and its teaching that every individual is born with a spiritual status and can claim social freedom as its birthright.

Here, we learnt how the Sufis spoke of expressing kind feelings of humanity in Islam, such as love, charity, liberalism, disposition to think favorably towards others, and to do them good, and some other socio-religious aspects and ideal religious teachings,

ways of living, thoughts and movements and cultural side of things, from the mystic literature of the Firdausi and Shuttaria orders of Bihar in the Sultanate period. This chapter also analyzed the Sufis contribution to education, social customs and Sama (mystic songs sung in audition parties).

A critical review of Persian literature of Bihar reflects that there was a continued growth and development of Persian prose and poetry in Bihar starting from the time of Sharfuddin Maneri (782H|1380 A.D.) till the period of Shaad Azim Abadi (1927). Apart from poetry we also come across contributions in the area of Tazkirah Nigari, muslim rulers not only conquered various parts in India with the help of sword and might, but also brought with them a number of learned men and a caravan of religious scholars. These scholars and religious preachers propagated Islam and its humanitarian values among the indigenous people of India. Among these men we find a number of Sufis who also put in a lot of contribution for Persian literature especially in the area of poetry. The origin and development of Sufi poetry in Bihar can well be understood through the readings of vast contribution by S.S.A.Y. Maneri (RA) which continues till the time of Sufi Maneri. Most of the Persian poets in between the period of these two Sufis had great inclination towards mysticism which also reflects through these writings.

This last section of the thesis discussed the literary contribution of prominent Sufis of Bihar which included, prose, poetry, Bilingual poets, Biographical Sketches (Tadhkiras), Letters, (Maktubat) and utterances and discourses. This chapter is considered the most important chapter of my thesis. These writings of Sufis are studied not just as literary works but primarily as a source of knowledge of the past. As evident in this chapter the Sufis were quite conscious of the socio-moral aspects of the situations which without any effort and necessary activities on their part might bring many into the fold of Islam. Sufism which was the semitic interpretation of mysticism to the Aryan mind found favour with the Indian Aryans. There was no compulsion of any element of compulsion pressure or even of persuasion. Conversion of non-muslims was no part of their mission and they spoke seldom about it and yet Sufi saints were largely responsible for the penetration of Islam in India.

Sufism in Bihar contributed immensely to protect the socio-religio and cultural fabric of society of Bihar. The impact of Hindu society was felt in many ways on the Muslims. The thesis also brings out the finding that the austerity lives spent by Great Sufis especially Maneri, Charamposh and Balkhi and their emphasis on charity and austerity.

The rich literary heritage left by the Sufis in the form of Maktubat, letters, Malfuzat, letters, tazkiras, biographical accounts are also a valuable source of the study of religio-sociocultural life of the times. Sufi literature, both in Persian and vernacular focuses on certain specific themes. The most important of these is the mystic relationship between human beings and God. The second is the relationship between human beings and their mutual rights, Huquq al-ibad. The third is the inherent oneness of different faiths. The fourth is the emphasis on love, tolerance and respect for the sentiments of others. The fifth is humanitarian service. The oral preaching's and writings of the Sufis are replete with such ideas and anecdotes.

Undoubtedly, one main finding of this research work is that Sufism made Islam more reachable to common people. The second being that it appealed to all sections of the society, be it Kings, Nobles or common downtrodden people. Some more findings include that huge amount of Persian manuscripts are available at various Khanqahs giving valuable information on Sufi traditions, social conditions and religious insights of the period of the concerned Sufis.

It was also found that almost each Sufi had tremendous inclination towards Persian learning. Local magazines, authors, publishers have published articles and booklets on individual Sufis. However a recommendation from my side would be to collect and arrange those valuable pieces into voluminous, authentic and long lasting study material. Also, most of the secondary sources available on this topic are mainly focused upon the life history and family branch. The authors do mention the titles of written books and other literary pieces, however no serious effort has been made to read, study, analyze or critically evaluate those literary pieces.

There are a number of Khanqahs in Bihar; each one is quite significant, for it is like a mine of sources, on Persian literature.

Me, as an individual mineworker, probably could just get into one of the corner of the huge mine and could gather only limited piece of information. I feel, there is a need to work on the topic along with a team of experts and research scholars to unearth the real wealth of the mine called 'Sufi literature'.

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